

PLUS INSIDE:

■ **COACH&BUS 2003:**
A PRE-SHOW SPECIAL

CBW

COACH AND BUS WEEK

The PSV industry's news weekly

■ **TOP TRANSPORT
ADVISER DAVID BEGG
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'LACK OF PROGRESS'**

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Yes, age does matter

In an industry where recruitment and retention are major issues there should be a warm welcome for the Government's moves to outlaw age discrimination in employment and vocational training.

Equality and Diversity: Age Matters, published on July 2 2003, seeks views on proposals for the implementation of new anti-discrimination law under the European Employment Directive.

It seeks views on a number of issues including: retirement age; recruitment, selection and promotion; pay and non-pay benefits; unfair dismissal; employment-related insurance and statutory redundancy payments. Current mandatory retirement ages could be abolished in favour of age 70.

The Government says it will develop draft legislation once it has considered the responses to this consultation, which ends on October 20. It will consult on draft regulations in the first half of 2004. The legislation will come into force on October 1, 2006, but it aims to lay it before Parliament by the end of 2004.

According to Trade and Industry Secretary Patricia Hewitt: "Age discrimination is the last bastion of lawful unfair discrimination in the workplace and it will be outlawed. In particular we must challenge the ageist assumption that younger employees make the best workers. It is a sad fact that thousands of people in their 40s and 50s who have been made redundant never work again."

"It is vital that we widen the pool of workers so that employers can make the most of the full range of talent and skills available. Research suggests that age discrimination costs the UK £16 billion a year but this legislation is not about forcing

people to work longer. It will provide more choice and flexibility for those who wish to stay in work in their fifties and sixties."

There will be some in the industry saying: "So what?" Steve Whiteway at Epsom Coaches has a scheme in place that specifically recruits older drivers. Epsom is more than happy to find work for those in their 40s and 50s who are looking to start a new career.

Meanwhile, Lincolnshire RoadCar is one of the first bus companies in the UK to be accredited as Age Positive by the Government's Department of Work and Pensions. RoadCar's Area Manager Lincoln, Dave Skepper, said: "We have long recognised that over-fifties applicants make good bus drivers because, not only do they usually have good driving records, they have developed the necessary life skills to help look after our customers."

So is the PSV industry ageist? Probably not. But there are barriers. Just passing the medical to retain your PCV entitlement can be a struggle after the age of 45, never mind 65 - even if you've successfully booked an appointment with your family doctor (we understand that, in some areas, this is becoming very difficult). And it's not unknown for insurers to take a dim view of older drivers.

We may applaud the anti-ageist moves but legislation alone won't solve the problem.

Mike Morgan, Editor



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IN BRIEF

■ For the first time, industry analysts Plimsoll Publishing have scored the top 796 companies in the coach and bus industry on their level of 'fitness', or overall efficiency. This new feature is to be added to the forthcoming *Bus & Coach Operators Plimsoll Analysis: 4th Edition 2003* due for publication in August.

■ First's London and South East Bus Division has become the first bus company in the UK, as well as the 'first in First', to achieve EN ISO 14001 certification. The certification covers management of environmental issues at the division's bus maintenance depots at Bracknell, Slough, Rainham, Hackney, Northumberland Park, Orpington, Westbourne Park, Uxbridge, Alpertown, Greenford and Acton. The division has a very good environmental record and its entire bus fleet is powered by ultra low sulphur diesel.

■ Consultancy FaberMaunsell has been appointed by Transport Initiatives Edinburgh (TIE) to provide engineering, operational and environmental advice for Line 3 of the proposed Edinburgh Tram Network. At a public consultation meeting in the city TIE recently admitted there could be a £75 million shortfall in the construction of the first two lines. Work on lines one and two is not expected to start until 2006.

■ DFDS Seaways' new ship, MS Dana Sirena, sailed into the port of Harwich last month, completing its inaugural journey from Esbjerg, Denmark. The ship provides the only direct passenger seaway from the UK to Denmark, departing from Harwich every other day until August 31. After that, it will run on a three times a week frequency, with a journey time of around 18 hours. The new ship can accommodate 600 passengers in 196 cabins. On-board facilities include two restaurants, a bar with live entertainment, a dance area and a shop.

■ A 25-mile rapid transit system between Huntingdon and Cambridge is on track for a 2007 start. The Cambridgeshire scheme is being heralded by a road show visiting villages along the route. The county council plans to use the track bed of a disused railway to build a 12-mile guideway along part of the route and it is envisaged that 'tram-like' vehicles will be used.

Ten-Year Plan progress is

Road congestion and local authority spending is questioned in CfIT report

BY ANNA TURNER, NEWS EDITOR

The Commission for Integrated Transport (CfIT) has criticised the Government's pace of delivering aspects of its Ten-Year Plan for Transport.

A report into the progress made so far, just published by CfIT, welcomes increased funding and what it calls 'the significant progress in many directions' but says key issues will have to be addressed to step up the pace of delivery.

The report emphasises the Government's own estimate that congestion on all roads by 2010 is now forecast to be 27 to 32% higher than in 2000 without the Ten-Year Plan, but 11 to 20% with

the plan. The original estimate was of 15% without the plan and a reduction of 6% with the plan. The commission has called for a national system of road user charging to reduce the amount of cars on the road and tempt people back to public transport.

CfIT's Chairman, Professor David Begg, said: "The Government has recently started to increase funding to ease bottlenecks and pressure points, but we need to make sure that the service improvements this brings are not quickly swallowed up by traffic growth. These improvements need to be accompanied by demand restraint measures such as road pricing. Alistair

Darling is to be commended for recently grasping this issue in a way that his predecessors have not. This now needs to be followed up with a firm plan of action. The Commission believes that a fundamental review of how motorists pay to use the road network should form the starting point."

In the bus sector specifically the report said local authorities were "falling short" of spending their transport allocations due to skill shortages and local pressures from other sectors in the Single Capital Pot and were, therefore, making varied degrees of progress. It suggests that, while there are good examples of local authorities

CPT welcomes nationwide road-charging prospect

The Confederation of Passenger Transport has welcomed the possibility of a nationwide road-charging scheme to put people off motoring and boost public transport, identifying London's Congestion-Charging scheme as a success.



■ Simon Posner

Spokesman for the trade organisation, Simon Posner, told CBW: "We

share CfIT's (and the Government's) concern that progress has not been made as quickly as it might have been. We are particularly concerned that the cost of private motoring continues to fall in comparison to public transport and are disappointed at the Government's failure to address this.

"That said, we do believe that the framework set down for bus provision in the Transport Act, ie, Quality Partnerships, is the best way forward and we are working with the Government to roll this policy out. If we are to see sustained investment

by operators it is vital that we maintain a stable legislative framework. Constant change and uncertainty hinders investment.

"We are pleased that the Government is looking into the idea of road user charging as early indications are that congestion charging in London has been of benefit to public transport.

"We are concerned however that some local authorities are not spending enough money quickly enough on bus priority measures and urge the Government to put pressure on them to do so."

Busworkers' Charter is revealed by T&G

The Busworkers' Charter has been revealed in York by Graham Stevenson, the Transport & General Workers Union National Organiser for transport.

Three of the key elements are a guaranteed minimum salary of between £15,000 and £20,000 a year, final salary pension schemes and a reduction in the working week.

The union is calling for minimum standards to be established across all bus-operating companies to raise the value and respect of bus drivers, garage staff and engineers and so restore the image of the industry to tackle the press-

ing issues of recruitment and retention.

At the heart of the charter is the demand for a substantial increase in basic rates of pay and working conditions across the bus industry to compensate staff for the decline in the purchasing power of their wages since deregulation.

"Our charter is a positive move to establish minimum standards across all the bus-operating companies," said Mr Stevenson.

The charter, which at the time of writing was due to be launched nationally yesterday (July 9), establishes some of the key issues including:

- £15,000 to £20,000 a year guaranteed pay based on basic working week, depending on living costs
- Improved shift premiums and overtime payments
- The elimination of multi-tiered pay rates to be replaced by fairer progression procedures
- Flexible hours packages linked to longer personal free time
- A complete revision of the Domestic Driving Hours Rules to reduce the working week
- Driving periods to be a maximum of eight hours daily with four and half hours continuous spell
- Final salary pension schemes for each bus conglomerate

'not sufficient'

implementing Bus Quality Partnerships, this is not as yet on "a sufficient scale" to make a major impact on regional or national conditions.

Crucially, the report also underlines the variances in increased bus patronage. While bus patronage has increased overall, that increase is dominated by the contribution of London and a few other areas, while patronage continues to fall in many other areas. London is seen by CftT to have made significant progress through Congestion-Charging, the expansion of bus services and the provision of new buses.

CftT believes the Government must adopt key objectives to improve progress:

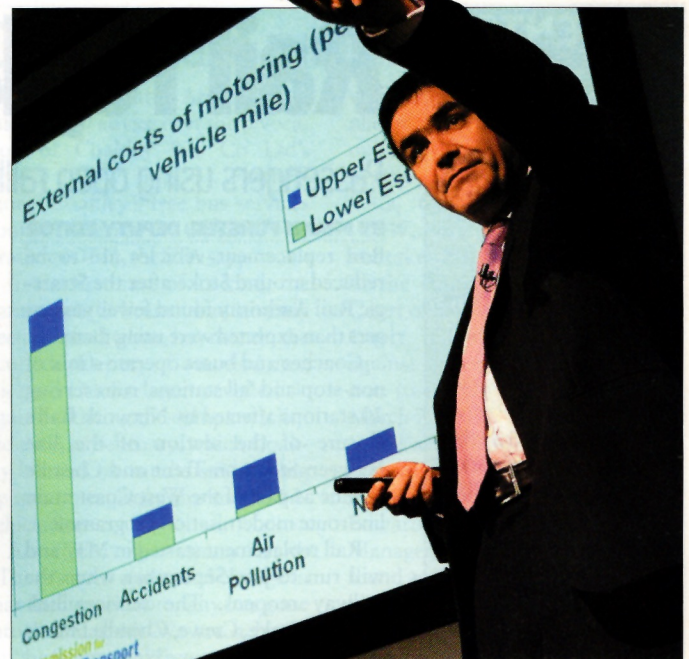
- Confirm its commitment to inte-

grated transport

- Clarify its policies regarding traffic reduction
- Embark upon a thorough investigation of the benefits and drawbacks of a nationwide system of road user charging - and take the lead in persuading the public of the need for such a system
- Commit to funding the longer-term programme

Professor Begg said: "We need to do more to tackle social inclusion in transport and to combat rising public transport fares at a time of falling motoring costs. More public subsidy is needed so that the bus can better compete with the car."

"We have to question whether some of the Government's targets can be met."



■ David Begg calls for action on private motoring

NABI wins £85m Los Angeles contract for 60ft artics

North American Bus Industries (NABI), parent company of Optare, has won a \$139.9 million (£85m) contract for 200 advanced-design 60-foot lowfloor articulated buses powered by compressed natural gas (CNG) for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. First deliveries are in 2005, the remainder in 2006.

The new three-door NABI artic will be deployed on LA's 400-mile expanding rapid transit (BRT) network.



CBW questionnaire

Last issue (July 3) CBW asked operators to answer a questionnaire undertaken on behalf of Begbies, to find out more about the challenges and threats facing the PSV industry.

Completed questionnaires are due back by July 17 and the final report will be published in the autumn this year. There is the added bonus that one respondent can win a crate of Champagne for his or her efforts.

Please send responses either by fax on 01733 467770, or by post to: Mike Morgan, Editor, Coach and Bus Week, Bretton Court, Bretton, Peterborough PE3 8DZ, to arrive no later than Thursday July 17.

Examination body plans major changes to taking of CPC

The OCR (Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts Examining Board) examination body for the Certificate of Professional Competence qualification is making major changes to the structure of forthcoming examinations.

Current holders of the CPC Passenger National qualification who obtained their qualification before 1999 and are considering obtaining the CPC Passenger International element must do

so before June 2004. Otherwise the National examination will have to be taken again as well as the International element.

This will have a serious effect on operators who employ individuals planning to convert their National certificate to International after the June deadline. Not only will the CPC training course duration increase from four days to ten but the cost will increase in line with the longer course.

RoadCar gains credit for recruitment

Lincolnshire RoadCar is one of the first bus companies in the UK to be accredited as 'Age Positive' by the Government's Department of Work and Pensions. RoadCar is now an official 'Age Positive Champion'. It is only the fourth company of any kind to be accredited in Lincolnshire.

Trade Secretary Patricia Hewitt announced the intention to outlaw age discrimination by 2006 and, in preparation, the organisation Experience Works! is actively encouraging employers to ensure that their recruitment and employment policies provide equal opportunities for people of all ages.

RoadCar's Area Manager Lin-

coln, Dave Skepper, attended an age-diversity seminar organised by Experience Works! and discovered that the company was already engaged in many of the good practices suggested, particularly where the training and promotion of people over 50 was concerned.

The award of 'Age Positive Champion' recognises an organisation that tackles age discrimination. By sharpening and formalising existing policies, RoadCar demonstrated best practice.

Equality and Diversity: Age Matters, published on July 2 2003, seeks views on proposals for new anti-discrimination law.

EVENTS

July 13: Coaching Days Remembered, Cobham Bus Museum, Redhill Road, Cobham. 01932 868665

July 19: Omnibus Society meeting, Thatchers Arms, Mount Bures Essex. 01444 450822

August 12: CPT Wales Golf Challenge, Marriott St. Pierre Hotel & Country Club, Chepstow. 01291 625261

August 17: Helston - The Lizard Motor Bus Centenary. 01736 363254

September 6-7: UK Bus Driver of the Year, Blackpool seafront and Hilton Hotel. 01273 813763

September 18-20: Public Transport Fair Gothenburg, Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre. 00 46 317 08 80 00

September 23-25: CPT Coach & Bus Show, NEC, Birmingham. 020 7240 3131

September 25: British Coach & Bus Industry: Marketing for Growth, NEC, Birmingham. 01224 263134

October 8: Improving Transport in Rural Areas and Small Towns: The Next Steps, One Whitehall Place, Westminster, London. 020 7787 1210

October 8-9: International Group Leisure and Travel Show, G-Mex, Manchester. 01908 613323

October 8-10: MIT International, Paris Expo - Porte de Versailles Hall 3, 00 33 01 41 29 75 48

Rail replacement services

Passengers using open railheads rather than 'buses'

BY FRANK FORSTER, DEPUTY EDITOR

Rail replacement vehicles are to be reduced around Stoke after the Strategic Rail Authority found fewer passengers than expected were using them.

Coaches and buses operate a mix of non-stop and 'all stations' runs serving 20 stations affected by Network Rail's closure of the section of the line between Stoke-on-Trent and Cheadle Hulme as part of the West Coast main line route modernisation programme.

Rail replacement started in May and will run to late September when the railway reopens. The services link Stafford, Stoke, Crewe, Cheadle Hulme and Blythe Bridge as Network Rail spends £200m upgrading the rail lines in the area.

First's North West bus division won the contract from First North Western Trains to provide the buses that serve the 'local' services.

A team of around 30 drivers has been supplied by First and a local driver agency. There are three supervisors based at the Trafford Park site. The bus fleet is in radio contact with the depot. However, the longer distance runs are being co-ordinated by rail replacement specialist and coach operator Fraser Eagle of Accrington.

Network Rail Project Director James

Martin said that more passengers were driving to open railheads rather than use the connecting "buses".

"The 'bus' fleet is being drawn down to reflect the lower use," he said, though he stressed the existing timetable would continue to operate.

However, a First spokesman said: "Our bus services are basically unchanged and will continue running throughout the summer."

A Fraser Eagle spokesman said: "Coach numbers are always under review in any project of this nature. However, Fraser Eagle hasn't yet been advised to either increase or reduce the number of coaches." He said the work involved the use of 90 coaches per day.

The planning and operation of the First service is led by Mick Coombes, who was also Project Manager for the highly successful 2002 Commonwealth Games contract.

"We have also had valuable support from Cheshire County Council and Stockport MBC in upgrading bus shelters, bus stops, and road markings to make sure that rail passengers receive an extremely favourable impression of what taking the bus is like," he said.

In an unusual twist on the bus side, at key stations supervisors are supplied by Fraser Eagle under contract to First.



First uses 19 Wrights Scania based at temporary depot in Trafford Park, Manchester

A First spokesman said: "The fact that Fraser Eagle is under contract to First is unusual but because of their previous experience we have people, at Wilmslow and Cheadle Hulme, with expertise customer transfer."

"Our own people run the operation and are part of the same team that ran the Commonwealth Games exercise so we have expertise in managing vehicle movements."

"The 19 Scania L94 Wright Solar-bodied 43-seat single decks operating the services went into Huddersfield for a short time in an all-white livery. Now

BARCLAYS fuel hedging

Two months after the war in Iraq uncertainty still reigns.

With daily reports of sabotage to oil installations, as well as the ongoing political tension in the region, the three million barrels a day of Iraqi exports that many had expected by the year end looks increasing unlikely.

Furthermore, the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) compliance to the latest round of production cuts has so far been good.

At the time of writing, Brent still hovers above \$27/barrel.

Further down the curve, however, there still exist great opportunities to lock in attractive rates.

Not only is the diesel forward curve discounted versus spot prices but the strength of Sterling against

the US Dollar means that consumers can lock in rates that look cheap against recent historical prices.

The average price for gas oil derivatives in previous years have been:

2000	15.57 pence per litre (high: 21.72 ppl)
2001	13.82 pence per litre (high: 16.46 ppl)
2002	12.44 pence per litre (high: 15.00 ppl)
2003	15.15 pence per litre (YTD) (high: 23.37 ppl)

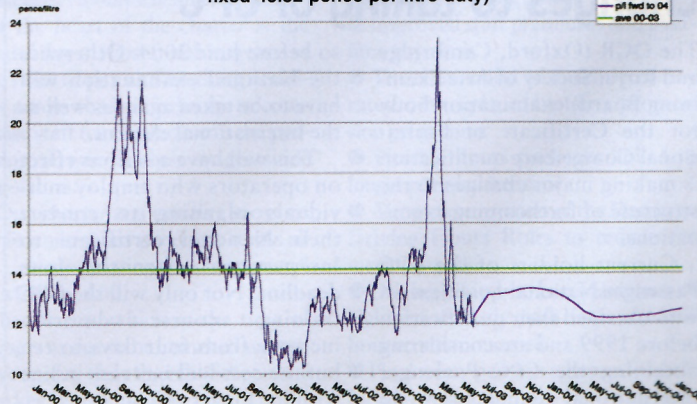
The current rate that a consumer can lock in for 2004 is around 12 pence per litre. As shown by the annual figures (above), not only is this signifi-

cantly below the highs of previous years, but also below the average price for this year and the last three years.

Despite the current low oil stocks, strong spot oil prices and ongoing political uncertainty (not

just in Iraq but also other oil exporting countries, such as Venezuela), businesses looking to fix budgets for next year now have a fantastic opportunity to attain levels below those seen in recent years.

Diesel pence per litre 2000-2003 (less fixed 45.82 pence per litre duty)



to be 'cut back'



they have the bus/rail livery that First uses in different parts of the UK.

"We do a fair amount of rail replacement in London as, indeed, all the London bus operators do but not much elsewhere.

"We don't have the coaching stock needed for the longer-distance work."

A Fraser Eagle spokesman said: "The Stoke project is following the same partnership model as last year's award-winning Milton Keynes rail replacement activity on the West Coast Mainline - a team effort

involving Silverlink, Virgin Trains, Railtrack and Network Rail. Fraser Eagle Management Services is pleased to be - once again - supplying supervisors and logistical expertise in partnership with the respective TOCs along the network.

"FirstGroup is a crucial part of the partnership."

A Virgin Trains spokesman said: "There has been some scaling back and adjustments tailored to demand but no major changes. The situation is kept under review and adjusted to suit requirements."

Coakley case rumblings continue

The Scottish Traffic Area (STA) is taking legal advice over the revocation of Coakley Bus Co Ltd's licence (CBW, July 3). Furthermore, Coakley's free bus services could be referred the Office of Fair Trading (OFT), the STA says.

In the first case of its kind, the company's O-licence had already been revoked when, last month, the Scottish Deputy Commissioner, Richard McFarlane, revoked it again following the company's liquidation in February, which Coakley blamed on vandalism pushing up insurance premiums on the 72-vehicle fleet.

An STA spokesman said: "There's been a material change in that the limited company has gone into liquidation. We are a bit in limbo ourselves at the moment. We are still seeking some legal advice on this case. The liquidators at the moment are in sole control of everything operated by Coakley Bus Company Ltd, not the directors of the company. The Deputy Commissioner is still of the opinion that the Coakley Bus Company O-licence has been revoked because there's been a change in the legal entity and the company does not exist any longer."

The company, of 19 Newhut Road, Braidhurst Industrial Estate, Motherwell, North Lanarkshire

was called before a Glasgow disciplinary inquiry on June 10. A previous decision of the then Scottish Traffic Commissioner, Michael Betts, to revoke the O-licence (CBW, November 29, 2001) had not taken effect pending the result of the company's appeal to the Court of Session, the Scottish High Court (CBW, July 18, 2002), against Transport Tribunal's decision to uphold the ruling (CBW, March 7, 2002).

The appeal, due in September, is in three parts. The STA spokesman said: "One was the good repute of Edward Coakley as a Transport Manager, which the Commissioner found against, the other was Coakley Bus Co Ltd, which was the licence in force at the time, and the other was a decision the Commissioner made to not grant an application on behalf of Central Bus Co Ltd, which was a new company, with the directors being Mr Coakley's daughter and son.

"The liquidator only has a say in the middle one. The appeal will still go ahead on the other two counts but, as far as we are concerned, the liquidators have made an approach to the Court of Session to abandon the Coakley Bus Co Ltd appeal."

With regard to the free services, the STA spokesman said: "Where's the money coming from?"

NatEx and P&O offer Boulogne link

National Express and P&O Ferries have joined forces to offer a new link to the bustling French fishing port of Boulogne from key destinations in London and the South East.

The busy harbour and historic town is one of the most popular destinations for British visitors, but foot passengers have struggled in the past as Boulogne does not have direct ferry services as modern superferries are too large for the port.

As a result, National Express and P&O Ferries have formed a combined service that offers coach departures from a range of locations, Channel crossings between Dover and Calais, then onward coach travel to Boulogne.

There are a total of 14 departure points: Victoria Coach Station, Ele-

phant & Castle, Walworth, New Cross, Lewisham and Eltham. Departure points in Kent are: Hempstead Valley, Stroud, Rochester, Chatham, Maidstone, Canterbury, Ashford and Dover.

The services are now operational and return fares start from £23.90 from London, £18.90 from Canterbury and £15.90 from Dover.

SpeedFerries, was to start a service between Dover and Boulogne in May using a 91m catamaran with a four-coach capacity (CBW, February 13).

However, the service has been postponed and the launch date will not now be announced until August 8, according to SpeedFerries' website. SpeedFerries says improved infrastructure in and around Boulogne is the key to its new service (CBW, June 26).

Wheel turns full Circle in Oxford

Former Guide Friday Director Paul Wallace has introduced an element of competition for open-top tours in Oxford.

Mr Wallace and his wife established Full Circle Tours Ltd and began operating a sightseeing tour in Oxford at the end of May. The service runs a similar route to the established City Sightseeing tour operated by Tappins - but travels in the opposite direction.

The company plans an increase to half-hourly frequency utilising two buses from July 26 until November 2. A third bus is now undergoing conversion to open top. They were all acquired from Travel West Midlands and include a Volvo Ailsa formerly with Tayside, now Travel Dundee, and a pair of MkII MCW MetroBuses - both having been put through an extensive refurbishment programme at Marshall Bus.

Mr Wallace said: "We aim to offer a new experience in sightseeing for visitors to Oxford. I am not convinced that the multi-lingual services, encumbered by headphones, are as good as they might be. I think the technology has some way to go yet before it is perfected. We are offering a single language tour with a 'live guide' who can interact with passengers. If we get customers who need a multi-lingual commentary we direct them across the road to the City Sightseeing tour.

"I was with Guide Friday for 12 years so this type of operation has become a way of life. We made a decision to have a go ourselves and settled on Oxford as being a natural location.

"We don't want to go head to head with City Sightseeing, which is why we run in the opposite direction."

Bargains for a few only

Poor turnout keeps prices low at Coach Europe auction

BY MIKE MORGAN, EDITOR

Twelve out of 26 coaches found buyers at Coach Europe's auction conducted last weekend by specialist auction house, Robson Kay & Co Ltd of Manchester.

A low turnout of potential buyers resulted in just 30 registered bidders though many had travelled long distances to attend the event.

Auctioneer, Jonathan Kay, told *CBW* he was surprised at the small number of bids, saying that some 20 operators had confirmed credit lines. However, he acknowledged three main factors had conspired against the event. "Operators may have been suspicious of an auction held by a dealership, though most coaches were of a very high standard," he said. "Also, the sale was held at short notice and it was not the best time of year."

Coach Europe's decision to hold an auction follows a successful first half-year trading and reserves had been fixed to protect the Irisbus dealership from potential auction risks, despite most Robson Kay sales being held without reserves. Mr



■ Some 26 coaches were put under the hammer following successful half-year trading

Kay said: "We will never know if no reserves would have brought more people."

The auction got off to an uncertain start as the first six late-model coaches failed to meet their reserve despite Mr Kay's reassurances that the figures fixed by Coach Europe were "very realistic."

However, the hammer fell on nine older coaches and three of six provisional deals were accepted."

Top price went to lot 7. This R-reg Scania Van Hool sold for £63,000 whereas, at the other end of the scale, a G-reg Javelin Paramount was sold for £15,500.

Coach Europe Sales Director, Tony Harvey, told *CBW*: "I was very surprised at the turn out. Those who bought were operators interested in older vehicles. Maybe an auction is not the way to sell newer vehicles, so, no, we won't be doing it again."

Goodwin's Zimbabwean contract

Goodwin's Coaches' new Volvo B12M TransBus Panther has met the test as the Zimbabwean Cricket Team's official team coach during its recent tour of England.

For both the Test series against England and the one-day triangular competition (featuring England, Zimbabwe and South Africa), the new Volvo consistently delivered reliability and comfort, playing its part in getting the team transported to test matches and training sessions on time and in style.

The B12M chassis has a 12-litre Volvo DH12D horizontal engine coupled to a five-speed ZF5HP602 gearbox. The highly-specified interior includes air conditioning, centre sunken toilet, drinks facilities, TV and video.

Appropriately registered 'C11ECB', Goodwin's new vehicle has a long-term contract with the England & Wales Cricket Board and will, after the current Zimbabwean tour, be on the road with the South African Ladies Cricket Team.

Manchester-based Goodwin's Coaches, with the experience of five generations in the business, has established an enviable reputation which has led to winning work from many high-profile clients, not just in the sporting world but also from the pop industry, too. Recent passengers on its Volvo coaches have included chart-topping artists such as Justin Timberlake.

Managing Director Jeff Goodwin said: "We are able to offer a combination of brand new, reliable and well-equipped coaches, with a highly-competent and personal service provided by our experienced drivers. This winning formula seems to have struck a chord with many high-profile clients."

"When you are responsible for getting sports and music stars to their matches or gigs on time, reliability is more important than ever. The new

Volvo has done us proud - so far we have yet to have been caught out. I think the Zimbabwean team has been quite bowled over by the level of comfort and ride quality, too."



■ Zimbabwe's cricket captain, Heath Streak, pictured disembarking from the official Zimbabwean Cricket Team coach, a new Volvo B12M

Skills' shops online

Midlands coach operator, Skills Holidays, has invested £38,000 in IT equipment and training to bring the bookings, reservations and confirmation system at its ten retail outlets on line.

Tahir Hussain, Skills' newly-appointed head of IT and accounts, said: "The volatility of the holiday market means successful traders have to adapt to changes in consumer tastes quickly and effectively. Our enhanced IT infrastructure will provide better customer service to visitors to Skills' High Street shops not just by showing all the options and availabilities, but also by giving them real-time booking and instant documentation."

Assisted by Shawn Smith, a third-year software engineering student from Nottingham Trent University, Skills has spent 12 months researching available systems and setting up the communication and data-processing structures required.

Shawn, 25, is the most recent in a line of students taken on full time by Skills as part of their university course: "We've enabled our colleagues to show what's available and to offer instant alternatives when first choices are fully booked. And I'm sure most people will appreciate being able to leave the shop with all their tickets, itineraries and contact details at hand."



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COACH AND BUS
WEEK ENDING

5 years ago...

■ A Bath coach operator has dismissed as "rubbish" claims that seatbelts may have saved lives when his vehicle crashed. A potential head-on impact was avoided when MC Coaches' driver Ian Dagger swerved his 1984 Berkhof B10M off the road and through a wall.

■ Berkhof owners in the North of England can now get specialised service closer to home following the appointment of AVE Berkhof's first ever sub-agent.

■ The process of consolidation among the privatised former London Buses operating subsidiaries continues with the conditionally-agreed sale of MTL-owned London Northern to Metroline.

10 years ago...

■ The threatened strike at Leicester CityBus was called off at the eleventh hour after the removal of company Chairman Geoffrey Hilditch by the company's majority shareholder, Leicester City Council.

■ United Bus is to open a dealership to handle UK sales and marketing of Bova integral coaches - with the promise that the range of Bova vehicles available in the UK will be extended later in the year.

■ First shots were exchanged in a potentially damaging bus war between Stagecoach subsidiary United Counties and municipally-owned Northampton Transport, with escalation already on the cards for later this month.

15 years ago...

■ GM Buses has appointed Manchester-born Dr Eric Burling Deputy Chief Executive. Dr Burling will take over at the beginning of September and replace Ralph Roberts as Chief Executive when he retires at the end of October.

■ Deregulation has not worked, according to the Association of Metropolitan Authorities Annual Report published recently.

■ Stagecoach subsidiary Hampshire bus, currently running free services along the lucrative Torbay seafront, having been denied parking facilities by Yelloway Trathens, has been forced to use the council coach park in Goodrington.

Stagecoach to pioneer demand-responsive

Fleet of 13 eight-seater Mercedes-Benz Vitos will be used on Fife service

BY MARTIN COLE, TECHNICAL
AND MINIBUS EDITOR

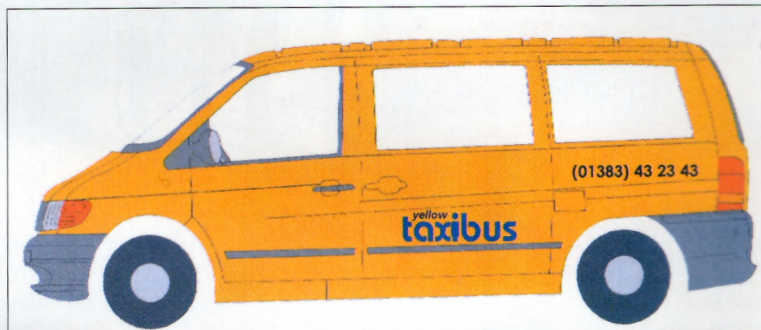
Stagecoach is to introduce the United Kingdom's first fully-commercial demand-responsive taxibus service on the congested route between Fife and Edinburgh.

Set to be highly distinctive, it will operate as a "phone and go" yellow taxibus service.

Stagecoach aims to combine the benefits of a fixed bus route with the flexibility of pre-booked taxi pickups. It will utilise a fleet of 13 eight-seaters, high-specification Mercedes-Benz Vitos, offering a high-frequency service between Dunfermline and the Scottish capital seven days a week.

The economic boom in Edinburgh and the related high cost of property has resulted in many people buying homes in the commuter belt north of the Forth in Fife. The new service will take advantage of extensive bus lanes on the route into Edinburgh, which has become increasingly congested with commuter traffic.

Yellow taxibus services will operate up to 21 hours a day, between 0600 hrs 0300 hrs Monday to Friday. Extensive availability is planned for weekends. Services will run every ten



■ Yellow taxibus is a first in Scotland and will have a distinctive appearance

minutes at peak times, offering travellers a real alternative to the daily commute on one of Scotland's most congested routes.

Fares will vary according to the number of people travelling and will start from as little as £2.

Stagecoach will launch its innovative and distinctive yellow taxibus operation in August. Other demand-responsive services around the country, although popular, are supported by public funding.

Brian Souter, Stagecoach Group Chief Executive, said: "The new yellow taxibus service is a real first for Scotland and the UK. It will offer a fast, frequent, flexible and convenient service.

"If you're a commuter going to

work, a pensioner going shopping or a family having a day out, you can just phone and go. We can pick up customers as quickly as ten minutes after getting their call and take them from their door straight to Princes Street in the heart of Edinburgh.

"We believe it will prove to be an attractive alternative to our existing bus services. It offers something for everyone, particularly commuters who have to battle the traffic jams into and out of Edinburgh every day."

Yellow taxibus will open up new travel opportunities for residents in the rapidly-expanding eastern area of Dunfermline not currently served by public transport. It will also link into and complement the Ferrytoll Park and Ride service.

Solus acquires Uttoxeter operation from Dunn-Line



■ The deal with Dunn-Line included the Uttoxeter premises, 11 coaches and Solus staff

Solus Coaches, a small but rapidly developing coach operation formed two years ago in Tamworth, has purchased Dunn-Line Uttoxeter - the former Stevensons operation.

Solus was founded by Andy Garrett with just one coach but he quickly expanded his operation to six vehicles. He operates mainly private hires and contracts and undertakes UK and continental journeys on behalf of tour operators.

Mr Garrett has been in the industry for just five years - starting out with Bowens. The deal with Dunn-Line included the Uttoxeter premises, 11 coaches and Solus has taken on the existing staff.

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That's why I went

Former First Devon and Cornwall MD Paul McGowan tells *CBW* the background to his recent departure from the company

BY FRANK FORSTER, DEPUTY EDITOR

As reported last week (*CBW*, July 3), former First Devon and Cornwall MD Paul McGowan, 41, says he was not sacked, as claimed in another trade journal.

Both Mr McGowan and First say his departure was mutually agreed and that his leaving was tied in with a 'restructuring' exercise (*CBW*, June 19). So why did he go?

Mr McGowan said: "I had been with First Devon & Cornwall for just over six years and achieved quite a lot of things in the time that I was there that were innovative, including three bus industry awards - two of those were runners up and one we won. I also achieved many awards within First for initiatives both in marketing and environmental best practice and achieved quality partnerships and many other things as well.

"However, it reached a point where I decided it was time to move on. I decided to restructure the company in April and that's the restructure mentioned in the other publication (and *CBW*) where we introduced more customer focus. The original intention was that I would introduce that. I prepared all the information but, once I decided I wanted to move on, I passed that across and Elaine is implementing it.

"I was offered the opportunity of considering alternative employment within other First subsidiaries but I decided that, after six years in Devon and Cornwall and 25 years with First and its previous owners it was time to look for other challenges within the industry.

"I am a qualified accountant and have a very strong CV and, therefore, decided it was time to move on and I continued managing the company until such time as was appropriate for me to leave so it wasn't as if it just happened out of the blue. It had been the subject of discussion for many months and I just continued working there

because I was conscious we needed to keep things moving.

"It's the longest I've been MD of any particular company. It's the third company I've been Managing Director of. We'd introduced so many new things to try to push public transport forward within a rural area, which isn't an easy thing to achieve.

"We were achieving customer growth but I think there comes a time when you think to yourself 'Should I be looking for another challenge now? Can somebody else look at this?' They may have different views on how to move things further forward.

"We'd just been successful with a few rural bus challenge initiatives, one which involved demand-responsive transport. The new network had been introduced in April within Cornwall and I just felt it was time for someone else to have a go. I felt it would be better to move on outside of First and, after discussions with my superiors, we reached agreement on a date for me to leave. That was only on June 6 and it is certainly my intention to remain within the industry and to use my skills that I have used successfully at the last three companies I have been Managing Director of.

"At 41, the trade journal article described me as 'old school', which I was quite astounded at as I was one of the youngest MDs in the group and the initiatives I've introduced and the awards I've won certainly weren't old school.

"My departure was absolutely mutually agreed and I continued working right up till the day we'd agreed would be my last. I moved forward with the restructure, which even included preparing the Powerpoint presentation that would be given to everybody the following week so I was totally comfortable that the new structure being introduced would work.

"It was right for me to move on and that the



■ Paul McGowan: 'longest time as MD'

structure would take the company forward and after six years as MD of a business in such an area it is perhaps the right time to see if somebody else can take the business another stage forward.

"It is not the end of the company as some people have said but more of a change in emphasis, concentrating more on the customer, and that was the reason for the network review in April that was launched.

"It was concentrating on the core customer, particularly within Cornwall and obviously stepping up the interurban services with the Excel brand and it was no good just changing the network and not changing the structure of the company.

"It was very much introducing more customer-based functions, not just in the travel shop element of the business but also the internal customer base, ie, the engineers to the drivers to the managers and the administration and that new structure will achieve that.

"Far from being the end of the company my view is that it would give the ability to deliver the growth that was needed. I'm quite proud of the things that we achieved while I was at the helm of the company. I left totally happy that I'd taken the business perhaps as far as I could. It was right for me to move on and it was right for me to leave First and it was totally by mutual agreement.

"The fact that 42 managers had been asked to reapply for roles within a new company structure was exactly what I proposed," Mr McGowan said.

PTEG appoints Support Unit Assistant Director

The Passenger Transport Executive Group (PTEG) has appointed Jonathan Bray Assistant Director of its new Support Unit.

Based with Metro in West Yorkshire, the new unit will carry out research, provide policy advice and be responsible for raising the profile and influence of the PTEs. Jonathan's initial responsibilities will be in the areas of public affairs and local rail services.

Jonathan Bray was previously an

independent transport consultant. He recently completed a comprehensive guide to public transport good practice (*At the Leading Edge*) for the Strategic Rail Authority and Transport 2000.

Jonathan also has a strong track record of effective advocacy for better public transport. Until 2000 he was Campaign Director of the high-profile Save our Railways campaign, which opposed rail privatisation. He has also been

Transport 2000's rail campaigner and, earlier in the Nineties, he was a key figure in ALARM UK, which opposed damaging road schemes in favour of public transport alternatives.

"We represent the interests of a quarter of the people in Britain and need PTEG to be an influential body in shaping policy and delivering change," said PTEG's Chair and Metro Director General, Kieran Preston.

"Jonathan brings tremendous experience in lobbying and campaigning to the team to help us make an impact nationally. We are committed to making a strong case for the development of local rail services, delivery of essential light-rail systems, and major improvements in the quality and reach of our local bus networks. Without further progress in all these areas, we will be limited in our ability to deliver Government targets."

Optare committed to training local apprentices



Leeds and Rotherham-based Optare, one of Britain's largest bus makers, has committed itself to recruiting and training local apprentices in larger numbers than ever before.

Next month six apprentices will complete their training scheme and become qualified employees. In the next training year the company is taking ten apprentices. Two further apprentices are being recruited by Optare's Unitec after-sales support business.

The company is also influencing the new NVQ syllabus and college training programme to address those skills needed for employees in a fast-developing business, which is increasingly reliant on new technology.

Optare's training team has been

keen to take on board lessons from some of the best-known names in the automotive industry. Optare has built a 24-seater training room in the Manston Lane, Leeds plant and begun a Learn Direct scheme so that shop-floor employees can develop IT skills for their own benefit.

Bob Coombes, Optare's recently appointed Managing Director, said: "We live in an increasingly competitive world and it is essential that we maintain a supply of top quality, well trained and motivated people in future. Our apprenticeship scheme helps to ensure this and we are proud that we can bring Yorkshire people into a business which competes successfully for orders not only in the UK but in North America and other export markets, too."

First helps passenger celebrate his 103rd birthday

Robert Taggart celebrated his 103rd birthday with family and friends in Dunoon yesterday, courtesy of First.

Robert has been a regular traveller on local service 20 since First started to operate the service to East Kilbride. To thank him for his loyalty and custom over the years, the company gifted the use of a bus for a day to celebrate this latest milestone.

Robert, along with his family and friends Overtoun Park Bowling Club were driven to Robert's chosen location, Dunoon. After a stop-off in Arrochar for morning coffee, they arrived in Dunoon to the sun shining. The group enjoyed a walk along the sea front, did a spot of shopping and stopped for lunch before heading home late afternoon.

James Gray gave up his free time to drive the bus to Dunoon yesterday. James is based at the company's Knightswood depot. He said: "When I was a regular driver on service 20, Robert used to board my bus nearly every day of the week.

He would always make my day and I have grown very fond of him over the years. It continues to amaze me that he is still so active at 103 and it is a pleasure to drive the bus to Dunoon to make this birthday one to remember."

Robert said: "A great day was had by all. James is the friendliest bus driver I know and we would all like to thank him for his kindness today."

James presented Robert with a birthday cake - an exact replica of a First bus - a gift from all the service 20 bus drivers at Knightswood depot and the local trade union division.



One-time driver Mick becomes a director

Mick Clegg (above, right) has taken the fast track to promotion at east Lancashire-based Fraser Eagle.

Accrington-born Mick, 37, has been handed the task of steering Fraser Eagle Coaching into the future.

Just four years since he first jumped aboard as a driver, Mick is the firm's new Production Director.

"We have had a re-shuffle as part of an expansion drive and Mick has emerged as a key player," said Managing Director Ken Savage (above, left).

"Originally, he joined us as a driver but he found success in an administrative role as Roster Manager

and now we feel he is perfectly suited to Production Director, a new position within the division.

"He will be in charge not only of coaching but also of our Departures holiday arm; it is a challenging role."

Mick said: "This is a great opportunity for me and I cannot believe what has happened in such a relatively short space of time.

"Fraser Eagle Coaching is very dynamic and we are looking to grow over the next couple of years by making further additions to our coach fleet. It is an exciting time for everyone concerned."

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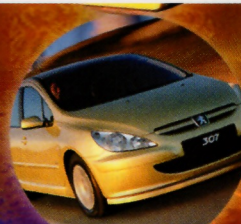
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Operator used others' O-discs

Commissioner refuses to grant a new licence for BA Motors

Licensing

Raymond Williams, who continued to operate using O-licence identity discs belonging to two other operators after his own O-licence had been revoked on maintenance grounds last year, has been refused a new O-licence by Wales Traffic Commissioner David Dixon.

Mr Williams, trading as BA Motors, of 1 Gladstone Terrace, Varteg, Pontypool, Gwent, had sought a fresh O-licence at a Port Talbot public inquiry. At the same time the commissioner was considering taking action against the O-licences held by the other operators involved, JD Cleverly Ltd, trading as Capital Group, of Avondale Road, Cwmbran, Gwent; and Gwyn Stonuary, trading as Premier Minibus Hire, of 46 Plasycloed Road, Cwmffrwdor, Pontypool.

Traffic Examiner Robert Hoskins said the matter came to light following a random check last December, when a BA Motors vehicle was seen displaying an O-licence disc belonging to Premier. An O-licence disc belonging to Cleverly was seen on a BA Motors vehicle, which had stopped in a layby in January. When interviewed, Mr Williams had agreed he was the owner of the vehicles concerned.

When asked why they were displaying other

operators' licence discs, he had said he understood it was legal. He had said there was no hire agreement, that he used his own driver and that no money was exchanged. When the other operators were interviewed, it emerged that that Mr Williams had told them he had applied for a new O-licence but there had been a delay in its processing. However, it was a legal operation.

'I didn't tell him I had lost my good repute since December and he should get another transport manager'

Mr Williams said he first held a PSV O-licence in the 1960s. He had understood that the licence revocation by Deputy Commissioner Alan Bourlet came into effect at the end of December rather than at the beginning. He agreed that the decision had been sent to him in writing. He said he had made a fresh application for an O-licence almost immediately in the hope of it being granted.

He claimed to have spoken to someone at the Traffic Area and thought he could continue to operate. He agreed he had used the others' O-licence discs after the public inquiry had been adjourned in January and again in March. He claimed that, during that time, nothing had been said to him about the use of "wrong discs".

He said he had believed it was acceptable as someone from the CPT had said it was all right. He stopped as soon as he was aware it was illegal and he had given the work, mainly school contracts, to another operator. He knew both the other operators very well and, in fact, has acted as Premier's transport manager.

The commissioner said that, as transport manager, Mr Williams was deemed to know the law and to ensure it was observed. He had signed a declaration to that effect when applying for an O-licence. Mr Williams had been in business for 40 years, he was a transport manager, yet he undertook to listen to third-hand information. He found that extraordinary.

Mr Williams said he thought the other operators were helping him out. He accepted he had told them the Traffic Area had said it was okay and he would have his own licence by January. He agreed he knew that the grant of the O-licence was not a foregone conclusion.

Asked about his role as Premier's transport

First Bristol loses appeal against order to pay £26,775

Operation

First Bristol Buses Ltd has lost its appeal against being ordered to pay a £26,775 penalty because of failures to operate local services in and around Weston-super-Mare as registered (CBW, January 16).

The Transport Tribunal thought the penalty imposed on the company, trading as First Bristol, of Oldmixon Crescent, Weston-super-Mare, North Somerset, was well deserved and creatively and proportionately calculated.

For the company, Christopher Charlesworth argued that the Commissioner had made no finding regarding the appropriate benchmark for performance and should have found it should have been 90% and not the 95% applied by the Traffic Commissioners. He pointed out that both the Court of Appeal and the Tribunal had accepted the 95% benchmark might not be achievable and argued that Malcolm Buchanan, Managing Director of Colin

Buchanan & Partners, had given clear evidence that 95% reliability was not achievable in the present case and was "impossibly stringent".

Disagreeing, the Tribunal said that, although Mr Buchanan had declined to suggest a figure which might be regarded as an attainable compliance percentage, the Commissioner (Western Traffic Commissioner Philip Brown) appeared to have settled on a figure of 90% as appropriate in the present case and given the company credit for operating its services at a level which was near to the 90% figure.

That seemed to it a reasonable approach, especially as Managing Director Brian Noton had agreed that 90% was achievable. The Court of Appeal had also stated that it remained important that the Commissioners' statutory powers should not be emasculated by an over-elaborate approach to the investigation or an unnecessary attention to detail.

Mr Charlesworth maintained that no reasonable Commissioner would have found that the roadworks in the centre of Weston-super-Mare were not a reasonable excuse for non-compliance and would not have preferred the limited evidence of the bus compliance officers to that of four witnesses for the company, one of whom was completely independent.

Disagreeing, the Tribunal said it was clear from the Commissioner's decision he had made allowances for the impact of the roadworks when he calculated the financial penalty on the basis of a non-compliance rate of 12.16%, whereas the overall failure rate had been 28.97%.

Mr Charlesworth argued that the Commissioner should not have relied upon the bus-monitoring exercise because it was unreliable. He said there was better evidence that the lost mileage was not as much as the 4% claimed by the bus compliance officers, as Mr Noton had established that the 4% found was

not typical of the company as a whole, and that the average figure overall should have been 1.75%, thus reducing the percentage of non-compliance by 2.3%.

He maintained that the statistics generally had a significant potential for error because of the small size of the sample. He submitted that the position in relation to sampling was identical to that in an earlier appeal



■ Philip Brown: 'allowances'

after revocation

manager, Mr Williams said that his visits were infrequent.

"In all fairness I left it to them, their vehicles were all up to scratch," said Mr Williams. "I didn't tell him I had lost my good repute since December and he should get another transport manager. I accept I should have told them."

Indicating he was unaware that he could have appealed against the Deputy Commissioner's decision, Mr Williams said: "I know I am not very good on the law."

Mr Stonuary said he had been a sole trader for ten years. He accepted he had lent Mr Williams an O-licence disc. Asked why, he said Mr Williams was desperate as he had no O-licence and he had said it was all right. When he found out it was not he stopped it immediately. He had been in the middle. Mr Williams had told him his O-licence was up. He had not told him it had been revoked and he had lost his good repute. He had not thought it was odd that Mr Williams was not operating under his own licence. As long as a disc was in the window he had thought it was okay.

Geoffrey Cleverly, a director of JD Cleverly, said it was a long-established company that had ceased trading two years ago. He had sold the assets of the company but had retained six O-licence discs. They had loaned a disc to Mr

Williams, as they understood that permission had been given by the Traffic Area for him to keep running. He agreed he had not thought to check, saying he would not have loaned the disc if he had known that it was illegal. He had taken Mr Williams' word for it.

For all three operators, Paul Carless said Mr Williams was facing a pending court case before the Abergavenny Magistrates in July for the alleged unauthorised use of vehicles. Mr Williams had traded on the good relationship he had with the other two operators. He had known them for many years. It had been a 'gentleman's agreement', with no money changing hands. Mr Williams had believed he was doing right, being satisfied in his own mind. He had been desperate to believe and desperate men did desperate things. He was foolish without a shadow of a doubt but he was not a crook. He had been a bit too rash in his dealings and he needed to be careful in the future.

Refusing to grant an O-licence to Mr Williams and indicating he thought his repute would not be regained for about two years, the Commissioner said he had been keen to re-enter the industry as soon as possible. He had ignored the O-licence revocation and had carried on. He knew that any fresh O-licence application would be heard at a public inquiry and had thought up a



■ David Dixon: 'Ignorance no excuse'

device for carrying on regardless by seeking O-licence discs from friends.

In doing so he had failed to tell them why. To rely upon ignorance of the law was not good enough. Mr Williams had signed undertakings to make proper arrangements for ensuring the law was observed. There had been no delay or mix up in processing the application; it had just taken its course.

The Commissioner took no action against the other two operators.

penalty

by the company, where the President of the tribunal had been critical of the Commissioner's failure to analyse, and give reasons for, his rejection of Mr Buchanan's warnings. The sample in the present case was much smaller than in the Stagecoach Ribble case before the Court of Appeal and the Commissioner had made no finding at all about the reliability of Mr Buchanan's evidence.

Disagreeing, the Tribunal said that, in its view, the samples were sufficiently large to assess performance in the relevant areas and to satisfy it that compliance was simply not there, whatever minor adjustments might have been made. Nor did it find the Commissioner had failed to analyse Mr Buchanan's evidence. He had rejected Mr Buchanan's conclusion that compliance was achieved in the later monitoring in October 2002, but not in the monitoring of May 2002, because of the roadworks.

He had dealt with Mr Buchanan's other conclusions individually, finally making allowances to reduce the overall non-compliance rate of over 28% to the 12.16% on which he decided to base the financial penalty, specifically to take "into account the explanations and submissions which have been put forward on the operator's behalf."

Indeed, he had calculated the penalty with the specific objective of achieving a proportionate result, on the basis that the company should pay £75 multiplied by the total num-

ber of vehicles it was licensed to use. That appeared to the tribunal not to be an unfair way of calculating the penalty to reflect the actual performance failure, far below the maximum penalty of £196,350 which could have been exacted, and to be consistent with the Court of Appeal's view that ultimately broad judgments had to be made as to the adequacy and reliability of an operator's published services and Commissioners should contrive to impose sanctions on those who seriously failed the travelling public.



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Questions on coach and bus operation should be sent to: Mike Morgan, Editor, *CBW*, Emap Active, Bretton Court, Bretton, Peterborough PE3 8DZ

How much can drivers be fined for breaking tacho rules?

Q To make my drivers take a more responsible attitude to the risk of penalties for failing to comply with drivers' hours and make proper records, etc, I wish to make them aware of the fines they face if caught. Could you please give some indication of the sums involved?

SR, Herts

A Drivers' hours breaches can result in fines up to £2,500 maximum for each offence. Failure to use a tachograph can result in a maximum fine of £5,000.

Deliberate falsification of tachograph records can result in either a maximum fine of £5,000 or a prison sentence up to two years.

The prime responsibility is on the driver to make correct records of his driving activities. You, as the employer, have a duty to take all reasonable steps to ensure that drivers can make, and do retain, proper records.

Sub-contracting private hire - should the customer give prior approval?

Q I run a small operation concentrating on private hire and occasionally I operate as sub-contractor for other companies that are short of vehicles or drivers. So far I have not had any problem with the hires but I would like to know if the customer should be aware of the sub-contract arrangement before I turn up with my coach. Can you advise please?

LD, Yorks

A Sub-contracting is a well-established practice between O-licence holders and is usually covered by the terms of contract for regular hires, eg, school contracts. Such regular contract hires would normally either specifically include or exclude the practice of sub-contracting by the successful tenderer.

With separate private hires, a wise operator would include in his terms and conditions of hire, a provision to allow him to sub-hire another operator to carry out the hire. It is then up to the customer to decide whether or not to agree to that condition. Where such a condition is not included in the contract or where the customer has not agreed to accept a sub-contracted operator (perhaps because he wishes to hire a specific vehicle or type of coach, etc) sub-contracting in these circumstances would constitute a breach of the contract and would leave the original operator open to an action for damages by the customer.

To avoid being caught up in any such action you might obtain advance written assurance from the original operator that the customer is aware and has accepted the sub-contract arrangement.

Is there any need for my fuel storage tank to be inspected?

Q A company has offered to inspect my fuel storage tank. Is there any need for this? What are the rules?

BL, Berks

A Over 5,000 pollution incidents per year are reported to the Environment Agency, the Government department which oversees protection of the environment. Many incidents involve oil leaking during storage or delivery and result in serious pollution of ground water. Every business has a legal and moral obligation to prevent pollution and failure to do so will result in heavy fines, expensive clean-up costs and possibly bad publicity from which the business might never recover.

To reduce the number of incidents, the Government introduced legislation to improve the construction and maintenance of storage tanks - The Control of Pollution (Oil Storage)(England) Regulations 2001. For our industry, the regulations apply to outdoor tanks with capacities exceeding 200 litres used for holding heating oil, lubrication oil, diesel, etc, at premises such as transport depots and bus stations. Oil drums and mobile bowers are included but not delivery tankers nor vehicle fuel tanks.

There seems to be no requirement to inspect tanks but a legal duty to comply with a set of construction and maintenance requirements which (for diesel and oil) are summarised as:

- Primary containment - of sufficient strength and structural integrity - unlikely to burst or leak
- Secondary containment - 110% of primary capacity, minimise risk of impact damage, impermeable to water and oil, no draining pipe or valve outside secondary containment, any fill or draw-off pipes which penetrate containment must be sealed
- All valves, filters, sight gauges (equipped with automatic valve), vent pipes, delivery pipes (eg,

hoses/nozzles) and other ancillary equipment must be within secondary containment

- Drip trays may additionally be required to catch spillage during use
- Possibly an automatic overfill prevention device
- Other arrangements apply to drums and bowers

By coincidence (?) this question is quite timely, as the dates for compliance are:

- New tanks immediately (effective from March 1 2002)
- Existing tanks at "significant risk" by September 1 2003
- Other existing tanks by September 1 2005

"Significant risk" is defined as within 10 metres of inland freshwater or coastal waters, or 50 metres of a well or borehole. However, the Environment Agency can use other criteria to deem a facility "at significant risk" and issue a "transitional notice" requiring specified improvements within a particular time.

Thick skinned?

Some tanks have a double skin, which, by itself, will not be sufficient protection as the attached pipework and ancillary equipment is not provided with secondary containment. However a proprietary prefabricated tank system, which has additional containment for ancillary equipment, is considered satisfactory.

Best practice

The Environment Agency provides a wealth of information on its website www.environment-agency.gov.uk (in this case Pollution Prevention Guidelines PPG2 and PPG26). The agency also recommends contingency plans for oil-spillage events.

Finally, perhaps on a more sceptical note, if you do choose a company to inspect your oil-storage facilities, ensure it is inspecting them for the right reasons and not "casing the joint" for later theft of your valuable diesel fuel.





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1998 DAF SB3000 auto VANHOOL ALIZEE H, 53 reclining seats	£99,500
1998 DAF SB3000 auto PLAXTON 320 PRIMA, 53 reclining seats	£89,500
1998 DAF SB3000 auto IKARUS 396, 49 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, air conditioning	£89,500
1998 EOS 90 man MAN eng, 49 reclining seats, rear toilet, air conditioning	£95,000
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1997 DAF SB3000 auto VANHOOL ALIZEE H, 49 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, air conditioning	£110,000
1997 DAF SB3000 man IKARUS 396, 49 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, air conditioning	£79,500
1997 DAF SB3000 auto IKARUS 350, 53 reclining seats	£59,500
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1996 DAF SB3000 man VANHOOL ALIZEE DH, 51 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, air conditioning	£89,500
1996 DAF SB3000 auto VANHOOL ALIZEE H, 49 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, air conditioning	£89,500
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Letter of the Week

'No Coaches Wanted' signs are everywhere, at home and abroad



FROM: TOM MATCHETT
M.Line International, Scotland

I look forward each Friday evening after paying wages and getting the weekend's rotas sorted to sitting down to a few brandies at home and reading the updates in your first-class coach mag, *CBW* - and, as with most operators, something in the mag gives us the hump and the urge to complain about something that we do not agree with.

Firstly, may I say I hope Peter Fenn and the Coach Tourism Council can make the Paris Council see sense and allow coaches to operate in a free zone in the city because, without this, Paris stands not to benefit from its great appeal to the many thousands of tourists who travel in the city by coach.

M.Line operates at least 80 coaches a season to Paris and clients spend several thousand euros in the city. So what do we do with these clients? Do we tell lies and give them the old WC Fields answers? "Sorry folks, change of itinerary today - Paris is closed for business."

Let's face it, London now gives out the same signals. So is there a city in Europe reading this editorial that wants our business? I know after the recent drop in the number of tourists visiting Scotland, we can all say in the UK, "Britain needs you."

So let's stop punting for the euros and punt our own country (London excluded). We owe it to the UK and its hard-working tourism councils to promote our own country and show the French and

Paris driving conditions need to be seen to be believed

FROM: HOWARD PILTZ
Wilmslow, Cheshire

In a recent article on the trials for coach tour operators and their drivers visiting Paris (*CBW*, June 12), Ms Tym of the European Tour Operators Association (ETOA) hit the nail on the head in noting that "the city is in the run-up to elections..." for how else does one explain the actions of City Hall?

Having driven past (note - past) Notre Dame several times since the Ile de la Cité was closed to coaches, it is the sheer desolation of the area that is so apparent, and I have spoken to restaurateurs within areas to be restricted and they're livid with City Hall.

The hypocrisy of the Paris City Hall allows manic driving conditions you wouldn't believe if you had not experienced them at the expense of coaches to retain popular support.

In the words of the website mentioned in the article, "at peak times there can be 2,000 tourist coaches trailing round the city's tourist site."

Oh dear. How can the Parisian cope with that as well as the tens of thousands of cars - mostly single occupancy - and the taxis? And I'm sorry but this cynic simply doesn't believe the assurances of another promise on that website - of employees charged with "welcoming and directing coach drivers..."

From experience I'd call that hassling, and with the threat of on-the-spot cash fines for dissension.

Unlike the knee-jerk comments heard recently, I shall continue to take my passengers around Paris under sufferance, if and where possible and if that is what they wish but in the sure and sound knowledge that someday, perhaps soon, sense will prevail.

Attitude of fellow coach operators continues to annoy me

FROM: PETER J EVANS
Minibus Executive Travel, Watford, Herts

After being in this industry for seven years, the attitude of fellow coach operators continues to

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Most UK councils should grab the opportunity to promote coach business and learn from the Paris and London authorities' "we have it, you don't" attitude and get together to show these two arrogant councils that they have more to offer than parking restrictions, No Coach Parking areas and, in short, no common sense.

It appears we have a third contender for first place in the "No Coaches Wanted" sector - sadly, Edinburgh, of all places.

Parking Officer: "Sorry Mr Coach Driver, I know you are stopped at this hotel to pick up 49 very important passengers who have to be at Edinburgh Airport for a 9am flight but you cannot park here between 7am and 9am."

Drivers, sadly, can only comment to guide leaders: "Is that you Jean? Sorry I am parked ten miles away... cannot access you until 9.05am. Yes, I understand that the flight to Madrid is 10am and the check in is..."

Result? Another 49 people who could not give a damn if they came back to Scotland again.

Industry needs 32,500 more drivers

Research carried out by TRANSFED shows that the coach and bus industry requires an additional 32,500 drivers in 2003 to replace drivers leaving the industry.

The number represents almost 25% of the drivers currently employed. The study confirms what many in the industry may already

suspect - retention is a bigger issue than recruitment throughout most of the UK.

More research is needed into the Community Transport industry, which is estimated to employ 10,000 people supported by an estimated 250,000 volunteers.

See page 25 for further details

Match information for England's Leicester City Council

Leicester City Council for driving coach operators contact

Flashback to CBW May 22

annoy me. The biggest issue in the industry is a shortage of drivers. *CBW* headlines this, with a shortfall of 32,000 drivers.

I am Hertfordshire based and have been established for several years. We pay our drivers up to £8.50 per hour, the high end of the pay league. Recently we had a driver approach us who worked for a local competitor who has over 30 coaches. The driver in question's take-home pay for his last week with this company was £190 for 55 hours worked - £3.45 per hour net. No wonder there are no drivers coming into this industry. Can anybody tell me how to educate coach operators?

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Tale of two Solos

Launched in the UK in 1998, the innovative Optare Solo brought lowfloor access to the minibus sector and it has sold in large numbers. However, the search for constant refinement has taken the NABI Group manufacturer down the road of change and Mike Morgan, *CBW* Editor, goes back-to-back in Leeds to put the latest versions to the test on *CBW*'s simulated local bus service route

Optare struck gold with the Solo, being in the right place with the right product at the right time to open up a significant niche.

Yet the mix of buyers is as varied as it is surprising. The big groups have Solos to complement their full-size lowfloor fleets. Usually they've replaced front-engined high-floor minibuses on high-frequency urban services but the Solo is equally found on rural routes such as those operated by East Anglian independent Norfolk Green of Kings Lynn.

The Solo's easy-access virtues have also seen it adopted by the non-PSV sector, with some surprising buyers such as the Royal British Legion. Meanwhile, the availability of Government funds has encouraged local authorities to have an increasing say in which vehicles are operated on supported services. Witness developments in Durham where county council funds have been used to purchase a Solo operated by a Go-Ahead subsidiary on a service linking local villages with Darlington Memorial Hospital. And, as social inclusion crept up the political agenda, Blackpool pioneered the Lifestyle Line, selecting the Solo as the ideal vehicle for a supported service linking deprived areas of the town.

Optare was quick to win appreciation for its innovative approach to the design and construc-

tion of the Solo. The Government's Design Council named it as a Millennium Product - the only bus to be so designated - and it subsequently became the only automotive product to win an Award for Innovation in The Queen's Awards for Enterprise 2000 - the first time that a bus of any make has received such an accolade.

No surprise, then, that there are now over 1,000 Solos on UK roads. However, despite this success, it has not been without its problems. Intensive service has teased out those components that fail early when under stress and there was an embarrassing batch of very noisy rear axles. In addition, some find the standard 122 bhp (90 kW) engine to be underpowered - particularly in hilly terrain or where sustained high-speed running is required.

On the other hand, Optare is not a company to rest on its laurels and a programme of constant improvement comes with the territory. Where necessary, components have been beefed up and the rear axle problem is now consigned to history. Meanwhile, a high-powered engine option counters any problems with performance but this requires Allison's new-generation 2000-series gearbox, which replaces the long running, and soon-to-be-deleted, AT545.

Optare now has two Solo demonstrators that



are available to operators who want to experience the changes. At first glance they are identical twins apart from shade of colour and choice of moquette. They even look the same under the bonnet... but, as *CBW* discovered in this exclusive back-to-back road test, out on the road there's a different response from the accelerator pedal.

BUILD

The Solo is a purpose-built lowfloor integral bus, which meets demand for wheelchair-accessible local service buses while meeting the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). It differs from other vehicles on the market not only because it is a 2.5-metre-wide, compact integral but also because it is a rear-engined vehicle with its entrance positioned behind the steering axle.

Significant sales in the UK are complemented by substantial success in export markets - particu-



■ First time around: 90 kW Solo in Bradford half way through test



■ Same stop, different bus: 100 kW Solo makes light work of same trip

■ Ready for the off: they appear to be identical but test identifies significant difference



larly in the United States where it is sold under the umbrella brand of Optare's parent company, NABI.

Designed and built in the UK by Optare at Leeds, it is a steel-framed bus available in two lengths at either 8.5 or 9.2 metres with seating capacity of up to 33 and a maximum payload capability of around 50 passengers.

Features such as air suspension with kneeling facility, all-round disc brakes and an electric retarder are all standard equipment.

The Solo's rear-mounted drive train and cooling system are supported in a demountable cradle and the standard UK specification calls for four-cylinder Mercedes-Benz 900-series engine and an Allison automatic gearbox. A Cummins six-cylinder unit is fitted on US models.

Other variations on the standard Solo theme include vehicles fitted with wheelchair tracking and the recently introduced option of a high-powered version of the 900 engine, which is boosted from 122 bhp (90 kW) to 147 bhp (110 kW) and consequently requires the five-speed Allison 2000-series gearbox in lieu of the four-speed Allison AT545.

Our test Solos represent the new order. Both had 2000-series gearboxes but they had different engines - 90 kW and 110 kW.

PASSENGER IMPRESSIONS

The 8.5-metre Solo can accommodate up to 29 seated with up to 33 seated on the 9.2-metre model. The 2.5-metre body width improves passenger space when compared with 2.4-metre-wide competitors and the positioning of the entrance door behind the front axle ensures that there is no penalty in the carrying capacity.

Many of the seats are in the front lowfloor area so most of the passengers don't have to negotiate

the two steps that rise over the rear axle. Some 13 seats are fitted in this raised area.

Another bonus from the positioning of the doorway is that the entrance step is not constrained by approach angles, providing a normal ride height of 265 mm, which Optare claims is lower than any other bus on the street.

Our test duo was fitted with lightweight composite manual ramps that effectively bridge the gap between Solo and pavement but, in any case, the kneeling suspension lowers the entrance to 200 mm.

Passenger comfort is to some degree governed by choice of seat and the Esteban Civic V2s fitted to the demonstration vehicles were better than average. However, noise and ride quality are equally significant, and noise levels have been reduced, whereas the full air suspension has been a major factor in the Solo's success, providing a smooth ride on all but the worst road surfaces.

DRIVER IMPRESSIONS

One of the Solo's unsung virtues is staring drivers in the eye as soon as they step into the cab. Adjust the steering column to optimum rake and you have a very comfortable working environment that makes light of the need to turn in excess of 90 degrees to meet and greet passengers - though this must be awkward on those Solos fitted with anti-vandal screens.

All controls are literally at hand - a touch button panel on the right of the upright dash and handbrake etc below the side window. Furthermore, the road holding is nothing short of superb.

PERFORMANCE

Take a standard 90 kW Solo out on the road and its performance is adequate. Indeed, CBW's Yorkshire test route from Cross Gates to Bradford Interchange was achieved without drama, enabling me to appreciate the almost imperceptible gear changes delivered by the 2000-series gearbox. It was also time to note just how quiet the rear axle is now that Albion has introduced state-of-the-art machining processes.

This smoother driveline together with enhanced soundproofing is of direct benefit to the quality of the ride experience and also made the Solo better to drive.

It is whisper-quiet in the cab, sounding for all the world like an electric vehicle with only tyre noise for company. Noise inevitably increases towards the rear of the passenger compartment but at no time is it intrusive. The enhanced sound deadening works.

Upon return to Cross Gates and Optare's Manston Lane plant there was time to share a quick meal break with UK Bus Sales Director Chris Wise, who had been riding 'shotgun'.

Chris explained the work done by Albion to improve the rear axle. Then we went back on the road and the 100 kW Solo was put through its paces.

The difference was immediate. Instead of pressing the accelerator pedal all the way to the floor it required minimal pressure to produce all the performance you could wish for out of a local service bus. As we negotiated central Leeds the vehicle

SPECIFICATION

Vehicle:	Optare Solo M850
Body:	8.5-metre with 29 seats or 26 seats plus wheelchair
Price:	around £65,000
Engine:	Euro 3 Mercedes-Benz OM 904 LA four-cylinder in-line - turbo-charged
Power:	either 122 bhp (90 kW) or 147 bhp (110 kW)
Capacity:	4.25 litre
Torque:	either 346.6 Lbf ft (470 Nm) or 427.8 Lbf ft (580 Nm) @ 1,200 rpm
Gearbox:	Allison 2000-series five-speed automatic
Retarder:	Telma
Steering:	Sheppard M83P2 power assisted; adjustable for rake
Brakes:	Wabco PAN17 dual-circuit air system with ABS discs on front and rear handbrake - spring release
Suspension:	air system front and rear
Front Axle:	DANA NDS 41 with leading taper leaf springs and Panhard rod
Rear axle:	Albion 7.20 single reduction hypoid, 4.10:1 ratio
Tyres:	215/75 17.5

DIMENSIONS

Length:	8.5 metres
Width:	2.5 metres
Height:	2.75 metres
Wheelbase:	5.525 metres
Unladen weight:	6,080 kg
GVW:	9,800 kg

PERFORMANCE

Fuel economy:	not tested
Acceleration:	not tested
Noise levels:	not tested



■ Driving position is unchanged - the revelation lies under the right foot



■ Unmistakable Solo styling is perhaps due for a revamp. Is Solo 2 on the horizon?

was noticeably more relaxed. Come the hills of Bradford and it romped up to the summit. Out on the open road of Stanningley bypass it hit 59 mph top speed in the time taken by its slower brother to reach 50 mph - 55 mph was its limit.

VERDICT

Optare's demonstrators invite oper-

ators to take a look at the Solo but you should check out the 100 kW engine. It knocks spots off the 90 kW and opens up new Solo opportunities - ie, interurban services and private hire. A 110 kW Solo with high-back seats would make a perfect dual-purpose coach - local service during the day, private hire at night.

Our test not only confirmed the benefits of the high-powered engine but also demonstrated the significantly smoother gear changes when the Merc 900-series is mated to the new-generation Allison 2000-series, which becomes standard with both engines towards the end of the year.

Optare has always presented its

demonstrators to the highest standards and the two test vehicles were no exception. However, the revised livery layout and choice of bright moquettes served to highlight the modern design though, if Optare runs according to form, the time is rapidly approaching for some styling tweaks to rejuvenate its looks.

WHO IS BUYING SOLOS



■ Durham County Council has launched an innovative new bus service specifically designed to keep Dales folk in touch with their local hospital, using a fully-seatbelted 8.5-metre Optare Solo, purchased by the council but operated on its behalf by Go North East from its Bishop Auckland depot. Service 70 - known as the Teesdale Link - operates between Darlington and Barnard Castle every two hours and is the first to employ assistants to help passengers at Darlington Memorial Hospital.



■ Injection of Lancashire County Council funding into a scheme originally introduced by Blackpool Borough Council has enabled two additional Solos to be added to the six vehicles purchased for the start of a pioneering socially-inclusive bus service in July 2002. Originally supported by Urban Bus Challenge funding, Lifestyle Line specifically serves relatively deprived areas of the town. The new 8.5-metre Solos allow for service extensions and frequency improvements.



■ Ex-servicemen and women at one of the small number of care homes run by the Royal British Legion are the first to benefit from a 29-seat, 9.2-metre Solo fitted with tracking to allow for wheelchairs. It is based in Ripon, North Yorkshire but funded by the RBL branch in Christleton, Cheshire. It is used for short trips for high-dependency residents but the option of 110 kW (145 bhp) engine coupled to Allison 2000-series five-speed gearbox was ideal for a trip to Buckingham Palace for the Queen's annual garden party.



■ Expanding East Anglian independent Norfolk Green of Kings Lynn has increased its Solo fleet from six to nine as the company continues to grow its passenger base through acquiring new services and improving its existing network. Purchase of the new trio of 9.2-metre vehicles follows a successful tender for a two-vehicle Norfolk County Council contract to operate the two-hourly X98 between Kings Lynn and Cromer. The third Solo is Norfolk Green's spare lowfloor bus.

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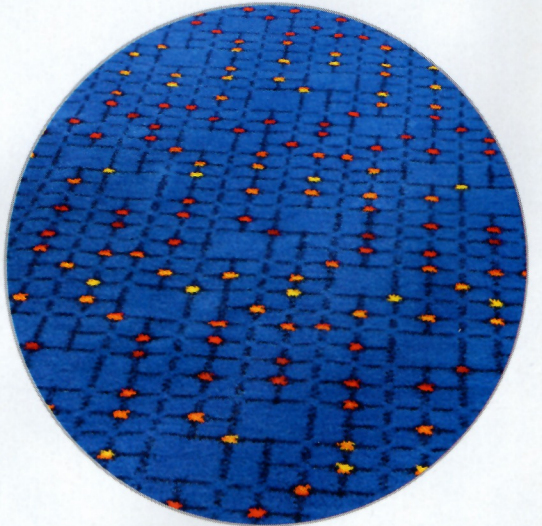
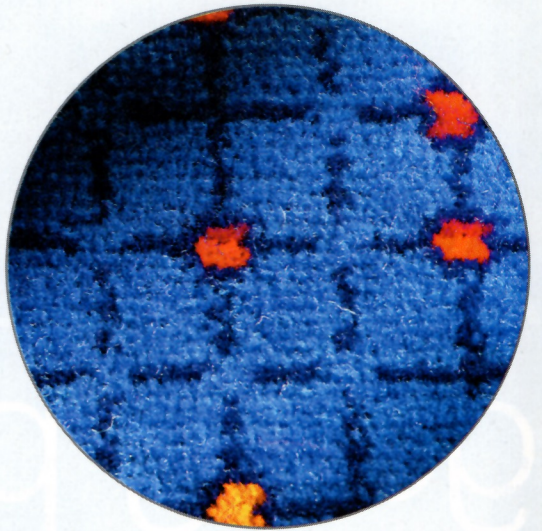
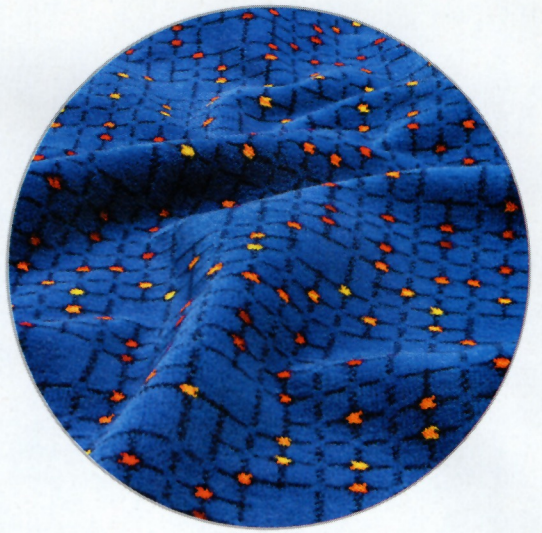
An industry going places



23-25 SEPTEMBER 2003 AT THE NEC BIRMINGHAM



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www.holdsworth.co.uk

Show preview

COACH&BUS 2003

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Coach & Bus 2003 is organised by the
Confederation of Passenger Transport UK

Website www.coachandbusshow.com
provides news, information, and a complete exhibitors' list.

Virtually a sell-out

Coach&Bus 2003, taking place September 23-25, 2003 at the NEC, Birmingham, will bring together the leading players from every aspect of the bus, coach and coach-tourism related industries.

Great efforts have gone into ensuring that the size and shape of this year's show is in line with what exhibitors have said they want it to be. *Coach&Bus 2003* will, therefore, see over 300 exhibitors showcasing their latest products and services in four halls and 25,000 square metres of exhibition space over an intensive three-day period.

All areas of the show have sold very strongly, so much so that the event is virtually sold out for 2003, which is very positive for every sector of the industry. For exhibitors who wish to reserve space for the 2004 show, a sales pack will be available from July onwards.

WHAT'S NEW FOR THIS YEAR

- An extensive marketing campaign, including new branding for the show
- Pre-registration with chance to win a holiday for two in the Caribbean
- Seminar programme, including one-day conference in association with CFTP
- First ever President's Reception at the show
- New *Coach&Bus* Vehicle Design Awards
- Co-location with PTS 2003

KEY FACTS

- Premier coach, bus and tourism show in Europe
- Organised by Expo Coach Limited, a joint venture between CPT and Expo Management
- 25,000 square metre exhibition space over four halls at the NEC, one of the leading venues in Europe
- Among the total of 281 exhibitors, 100 vehicle exhibits are expected at the show
- With over 97% of all available space sold, the show is to all intents and purposes a sell out

SHOW PROGRAMME

Tuesday, September 23

- *Coach&Bus* show and *PTS* open - day one
- Press day
- Judging for the SAE-UK Awards during the course of the day
- Passenger Transport Solutions show opens - day one
- seminar programme day one
- CTC Dinner - Villa Park - (NB not an official show-related event)

Wednesday, September 24

- *Coach&Bus* show - day two
- Passenger Transport Solutions show - day two (final day)
- seminar programme - day two
- CPT - two half-day seminars
- CPT President's reception
- SAE-UK Awards presentation (at President's reception)

Thursday, September 25,

- *Coach&Bus* show - day three (final day)
- RGU one-day conference

I hope to see you there.

Brian Nimick
Director General, CPT



SHOW PREVIEW

COACH&BUS
2003

Coach & Bus is the industry show of the Confederation of Passenger Transport UK, which is the national trade association for coach, bus and light-rail operators in the UK.

Supported by leading industry bodies and organisations including *Coach and Bus Week*, *CoachMarque*, *TRANSfED*, the Coach Tourism Council and the Department of Transport, the Coach&Bus show has, over a number of years, grown to become one of the leading European public transport events in Europe.



As part of an ambition to continue to develop the Coach&Bus brand as the premier show for anyone involved in road-based public transport in Europe, a new and more dynamic visual identity for the show has been devised and will be rolled out in the run up to the show and at the show itself.

One of the Coach&Bus show's great strengths is the wide range of quality exhibitors it attracts, reflecting the broad base of the passenger transport industry. To reflect this diversity and to assist visitor navigation at the show, four distinct brands all sharing the @ Coach&Bus suffix will be employed.

WHEELS@COACH&BUS



Quite literally, anything at the show with wheels on will come under this exhibitor category. All the latest vehicles in the bus, coach, minibus and welfare vehicle market will be on display at the show. Over 100 vehicles will demonstrate the latest technology and features in the passenger transport sector, with all the leading marques in the European industry represented.

ACCESS4ALL@COACH&BUS



The expanding accessibility market has seen rapid growth as a combination of legislation and good practice has led to new solutions to facilitate transport for people with different mobility requirements. At *Coach&Bus 2003*, over 30 exhibitors will be demonstrating the broad array of products and services now available in this sector.



Leading industry figures launch Coach & Bus 2003: (l-r) Show Director, Mark Griffin; CPT Director General, Brian Nimick; Brian Souter, Chief Executive, Stagecoach Group plc; Simon Posner, CPT Director of Communications; and, Rt Hon Lord Hogg of Cumbernauld, Chair of the Bus Appeals Body

New branding

OUT&ABOUT@COACH&BUS



Devoted to coach operators, group travel buyers, tourist services and venues throughout the UK and Europe, *OutandAbout@Coach&Bus* will provide a host of fresh new ideas for places to go and things to do. With the UK coach tourism market alone estimated to be worth around £1.9bn pa, this significant sector is well represented by its own dedicated and now distinctly-branded area at the show.

SPECIALISTS@COACH&BUS



The growing body of exhibitors, who manufacture and supply parts, accessories and allied services to the coach and bus industry, have been collectively branded as *Specialists@Coach&Bus*. These exhibitors are quite literally,

Pre-registration

The *Coach&Bus 2003* show is strictly a trade event, with entry free (a charge is levied for car parking at the NEC).

There are four easy ways to pre register for the show as follows:

- On line - simply complete the form at the show's website - www.coachandbusshow.com - and submit it electronically
- By phone - call the hotline number on 0870 429 4556 and register over the phone
- By post - complete the pre-registration mailer which will be sent out automatically to visitors of C&B2001, or look out for inserts in key industry publications
- By fax - complete the pre-registration mailer and fax back on 0870 429 4557

INCENTIVE GIVES VISITORS EXTRA REASON TO COME TO THE SHOW

As a new feature for this year's show, visitors who pre-register in advance and come to *Coach & Bus 2003* will be automatically entered into a free prize draw for a fabulous holiday for two in the Caribbean, courtesy of Ricon UK Ltd.

The lucky winner will be spending seven glorious nights with a partner at *Coco Reef* in Tobago, one of the finest Caribbean Resort hotels set amidst beautiful tropical gardens with its own private beach. Please note that terms and conditions apply - full details are given on the *Coach & Bus 2003* website - www.coachandbusshow.com

Local bus

→ Transport

The Agora Line Low Floor City Bus is a 12 metre, purpose designed city bus which features the very latest technology both in-vehicle and its manufacture. Equally at home in city centre, suburban or inter-town environments the Agora will transport 44 seated plus 32 standing passengers in comfort and style. The Agora is powered by a 245hp Cursor 8 diesel engine.

The MidiRider SLF Low Floor Bus is a 10.8 metre bus design to suit operations where route access could be a problem for conventional sized vehicles. Built to a width of only 2.4 metres, the MidiRider will seat 39 plus 33 standing passengers. The MidiRider is powered by a 240hp tector diesel engine.

The LoGo Low Floor Minibus, offers the passenger easy access, due to the low floor, drop frame design. With an overall length of 8.5 metres and a fixed entry floor height of only 245mm, the LoGo will seat 24 plus 6 standing passengers. The LoGo is powered by 146hp Sofim diesel engine.

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ages for a
bus, then
three arrive
all at the
same time

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Irisbus MidiRider SLF

Irisbus Daily LoGo

SHOW PREVIEW

the specialist providers to the transport industry - manufacturers of seatbelts, route planners, finance houses, uniform specialists - everything for the changing needs of today's coach and bus operator.

Each exhibitor will be classified as one of these four sub groups and listed in the show catalogue and in other show literature and signage as such.

100-DAY CAMPAIGN TO DELIVER VISITORS TO SHOW

The 100-day countdown to the start of *Coach&Bus 2003*, which began on June 16, marked the start of an integrated PR and marketing campaign geared to attract quality visitors to the show.

Building on the new show identity and branding, the main elements of this campaign will include:

- Trade press advertising campaign in the main industry titles throughout the summer
- Targeted Direct Mail Campaign - series of mailouts to drive visitor attendance
- Incentivised pre-registration programme with the opportunity to win a holiday in the Caribbean
- Innovative e-mail campaign to previous attendees of industry shows
- Series of regular newsletters keeping the marketplace informed on all the key show news and developments
- Targeted PR campaign to raise awareness and generate interest in a

broad range of trade, specialist and regional bus press

- Regularly updated website, with a dedicated media centre to facilitate coverage by UK and European press
- Press Office facility to act as a conduit for exhibitor news to the media both in the run up to the show and at the show itself.

KEEPING EXHIBITORS AND VISITORS UP TO DATE WITH ALL THE NEWS

A dedicated website (www.coachandbusshow.com) has been set up to provide exhibitors, visitors and the press with up-to-the-minute news and information on *Coach&Bus 2003*.

As well as being able to pre-

register on line, visitors can access full show details such as opening times and travel information. A full listing of all exhibitors will help visitors make the most of their visit to the show. There is a full on-line manual, too, to help exhibitors get the most out of their presence at the show.

In a further innovation for this year, a newsletter entitled *News@Coach&Bus 2003* will be produced in the run up to the show, featuring the latest news and information on every aspect of *Coach&Bus 2003*. It will be produced monthly in printed form at the beginning on July, August and September, switching to electronic form in the immediate run up to the show.

...and Passenger Transport

Co-location brings further integration to *Coach&Bus* show

Passenger Transport Solutions 2003 - the annual conference and exhibition with a unique focus on multi-modal transport technology solutions will, for the first time, be held in parallel with *Coach&Bus 2003*. It will take place on the Tuesday and Wednesday of the show week.

The relocation of the highly-successful PTS show to a centrally-based venue is expected to attract a wide audience drawn from the bus, rail and light rail and local authority transport co-ordination markets.

With the political and economic emphasis very much on an integrated approach to public transport, there is a significant crossover in audience profile for both the *Coach&Bus* show and *PTS*.

Visitors to the NEC in 2003 will be able to gain access to both shows, which will be taking place in adjacent halls, with a single registration and a walkway linking the two shows.

BIGGER, BRIGHTER AND NOW IN BIRMINGHAM

Now less than three months away from opening its doors at its new venue, the 2003 *Passenger Transport Solutions* show (*PTS 2003*) is already set to be even bigger and even brighter, with the very latest technologies and solutions on display for the rapidly-developing passenger-transport sector.

PTS 2003 will this year take place at the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) near Birmingham on September 23-24, having outgrown its previous London venue. For the first time, too, *Passenger Transport Solutions* will be staged alongside the highly popular *Coach&Bus* show.

Now in its fourth year, *PTS* has already established itself as a leading annual 'B2B' forum for suppliers, operators, transport authorities and other industry specialists, with the exhibition and conference programme providing an important technical and commercial insight into future developments and trends central to improving the quality of passenger transport services.

Management support systems, passenger information provision, operational systems and services, transport and traffic planning and management, communications, ticketing and fare collection, transport infrastructure plus a whole raft of support services and specialist consultancy providers are just some of the disciplines featured strongly at *PTS*.

As Show Director Mark Griffin points out, the event has continued to go from strength to strength from an exhibitor point of view. He said: "PTS's exhibitor base covers a broad range of products and services, reflecting both the importance of the passenger transport sector in

general and the pace of innovation and development in service levels across all modes, be they road or rail based."

Mr Griffin said: "The relocation of *PTS* to a central venue and its co-location with *Coach&Bus 2003* seems to have been well received by exhibitors and this, combined with the growing reputation of the event, has seen a high level of repeat bookings, with a number of new exhibitors already putting their names down for this year's event."

The move to the NEC this year is also likely to sound a positive note with potential visitors, further underlined by a soon-to-be-announced high-profile seminar programme, which, if previous years' experience is anything to go by, will be a major draw at *PTS 2003*.

The ability to pre-register on line (www.aboutpts.com) and, with it, the facility to visit both *PTS* and *Coach&Bus 2003* with a single registration, will further enhance the experience for this year's visitors.

The multi-modal appeal of the show - *PTS* addresses the needs of the bus, rail and light rail and local authority transport co-ordination markets - is echoed by the wide range of organisations that have lent their support to this year's show.

These include the CPT (the Confederation of Passenger Transport UK), the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC),

The Institute of Logistics and Transport, Journey Solutions, Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers (ATCO), Intelligent Transport Society for the UK (ITS (UK)), the Realtime Information Group and Centro.

The show is sponsored by three transport magazines - *Transit*, *Local Transport Today* and *Modern Railways*.

"As a unique event within an important and growing market sector, visitors to *Passenger Transport Solutions 2003* will see the spotlight on innovative technologies and value-added management solutions, with the potential to transform the provision of passenger transport for operators and customers, all in one of the best exhibition environments in Europe," said Mark Griffin, "All in all, *PTS 2003* promises to be bigger, brighter and now in Birmingham".

PTS - AN EXTENSIVE TWO DAYS OF SEMINARS

**Day 1 - Tuesday
September 23**

**1045 hrs
Getting real-time
information right**

Sponsor - Realtime Information Group

Chair - John Austin, Associate, Integrated Transport Planning Ltd

A. Addressing the importance of

High-quality seminar programme

There can be little doubt that a high-quality and well-structured seminar programme adds value for visitors coming to major trade shows. At *Coach&Bus 2003*, an informative and influential seminar programme promises to further enhance visitor quality to the show without distracting from the main focus of the exhibition in the halls.

TWO HALF-DAY SEMINARS ORGANISED BY THE CPT

Wednesday September 24
(day two of the show)
Morning Accessible Coaching
Afternoon Transport Security

Further details to be announced in due course.

ONE-DAY CONFERENCE, 'BRITISH BUS & COACH INDUSTRY: MARKETING FOR GROWTH'

Thursday September 25
(day three of the show)
A one-day conference, organised by the Centre for Transport Policy and the Robert Gordon University, entitled *British Bus & Coach Industry: Marketing for Growth*, will bring together key players within the transport industry to discuss the importance of marketing for the future growth of the coach and bus industry.

Chaired by the Director of the Centre for Transport Policy, Professor David Begg, the conference will seek to underline how the use of marketing to improve customer awareness of the benefits of coach and bus services provides an opportunity for operators to generate growth.

Further Information on this seminar can be obtained directly from the CfTP by contacting Alyson Harcus, tel 01224 263134 or e-mail a.m.harcus@rgu.ac.uk

PTS SEMINAR PROGRAMME

PTS 2003 will feature a full seminar programme on both days of the show - see page 30.

Solutions

data reliability and integrity in real-time provision;
Peter Crichton, Managing Director, Omnibus Solutions & Alastair Page, Managing Director, Action Information Management

B. Reaping the benefits of collaboration between local government, operators and private companies in real-time information provision;
Adrian Goodwin, Senior Systems Developer, RTI Project Manager, Centro

1245 hrs

Tracking and monitoring customers through ticketing;

Sponsor - Transport Card Forum & Journey Solutions
Chair - Claire Haigh, Project Director, Journey Solutions

A. Capturing smart card data for planning purposes;
Peter Stoddart, General Manager, ITSO & Jeremy Meal, Director, Smart Card & Ticketing Services, MVA Ltd
B. New opportunities in ticketing provision and value adding services;
Aileen Ross, Vertical Marketing Manager - Government, Zebra Technologies Europe Limited

1500 hrs Harnessing mobile data capture for operational efficiency;

Sponsor - ITS,
Chair - David Clowes, Director General, ITS United Kingdom

A. Technology in the palm of your

hand - electronic data capture for key asset inspection and storage;
George Fisher, Sales Director, Simply Mobile

B. Revenue protection on the move - creating hand-held data capture and reporting systems;
Mike Maybe, Revenue Recovery Manager, Serco Metrolink Manchester

Day 2 - Wednesday

September 24

1045 hrs

Taking technology to the front line - 'Smart' infrastructure for bus routes;

Sponsor - CPT,
Chair - ten-minute introduction by session chair Peter Warman, Independent Public Transport Consultant

A. Designing to provide quality passenger information through screen and display technology for use at bus stops and shelters; Jonathan Morley, Technical Director, Trueform

B. Using a configurable and auditable software system to provide a complete end-to-end bus stop passenger information solution;
Steven Harris, Project Manager IBSS (Software), Centro

1200 hrs

Marketing at the customer interface;

Sponsor - ATCO,
Chair Bill Tyson, Chairman and Managing Director, GMPTE



Mark Griffin: 'the facility to visit both PTS and *Coach&Bus* with a single registration, will further enhance the experience for this year's visitors'

A. Customer relationship marketing in the rail industry;

Speaker to be confirmed

B. Achieving 'customer delight': knowing and managing your customer base;
Malcolm Brown, Commercial Director, Midland Mainline (invited)

1400 hrs Managing the message to grow the market;

Sponsor - ACT,
Chair - Ray Stenning, Design

Director, Best Impressions

A. Addressing the marketing techniques of the car industry - can public transport keep up?
Amy Bristow, Workplace Travel Plan Co-ordinator, Hants, County Council

B. Persuasion through advertising and achieving attitude shift;
Peter Wiltshire, Visiting Research Fellow, Unit for Transport and Society, University of West of England

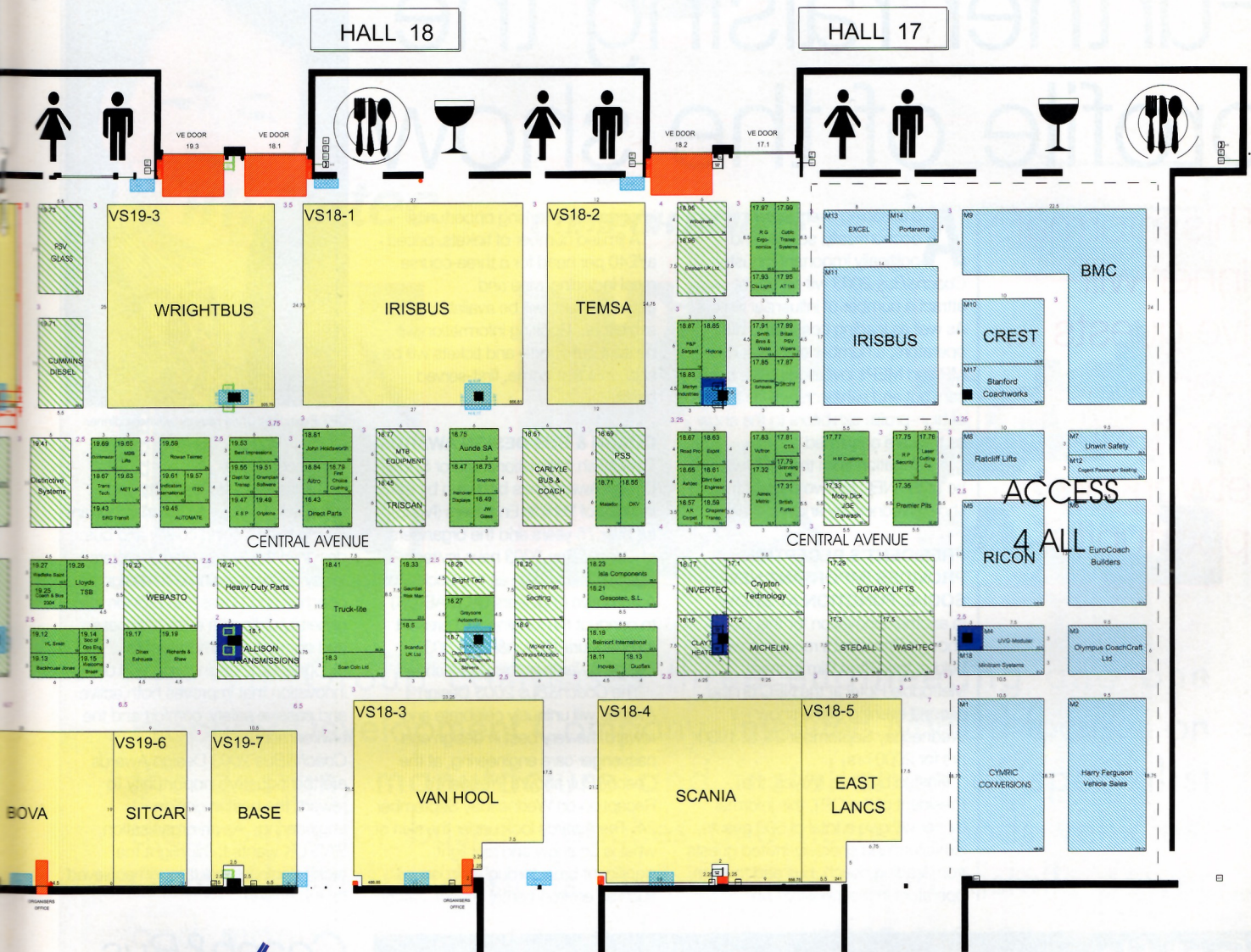
SHOW PREVIEW

Coach&Bus 2003

September 23-25

NEC, Birmingham





Site Plan



Further raising the profile of the show

'This informal dinner will give guests ... a very important networking opportunity'

As a leading event in an economically, socially and politically important industry, *Coach&Bus 2003* will no doubt attract a number of influential visitors. As well as leading coach and bus operators, a number of ministerial, MP and MEPs invitations have been sent out and exhibitors will be advised of high-profile exhibitors to the show as they are confirmed.

A delegation from the UITP will also be at the NEC for two days of the show (Wednesday and Thursday).

PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION PROVIDES IMPORTANT NEW SOCIAL FUNCTION AT SHOW

In another innovation for this year's show, a President's reception will be held at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole Hotel at the NEC on the second evening of the show - Wednesday September 24, at 1930 hrs for 2000 hrs.

Hosted by Chris Moyes, the President of the CPT, this informal dinner will give a total of 500 guests, exhibitors and specially-invited guests from leading coach, bus and tourism operators in the industry - an

important networking opportunity.

A limited number of tickets, priced at £40 per head for a three-course meal including wine and entertainment, will be available to exhibitors. Booking information will be sent out shortly and tickets will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis.

COACH & BUS DESIGN AWARDS

The British International Motor Show Design Awards has been run by the Institute of Vehicle Engineers (IVeH) for over 75 years and the organisers of *Coach&Bus 2003* have invited IVeH - now known as the Society of Automotive Engineers UK (SAE-UK) - to conduct the judging and present the inaugural *Coach&Bus 2003* Design Awards at this year's show.

The *Coach&Bus 2003* Design Awards will uniquely celebrate and reward the very best in design and passenger care engineering, at the *Coach&Bus* show's President's Reception on Wednesday September 24. The Awards look under the skin of what is on show and highlight significant breakthroughs on issues such as environmental impact, safety



CPT President Chris Moyes will host dinner

and accessibility.

The issues of accessibility and safety will continue to be an important driving force behind coach and bus design in the future. Manufacturers today are working hard to design coaches and buses that provide the general public with ease of access and comfort. It is important to recognise any engineering and design innovation that improves both active and passive safety, comfort and the environment.

Coach&Bus 2003 Design Awards are the industry's opportunity to reward the best in design engineering. As an organisation, SAE-UK wants to highlight the technological breakthrough achieved by the design.

fact file

Coach&Bus Design Awards

■ The *Coach and Bus 2003* Design Awards, judged and awarded by the Society of Automotive Engineers UK (SAE-UK), formerly known as the Institute of Vehicle Engineers (IVeH).

■ This new series of awards follows the success of the British International Motor Show Design Awards, run by the Institute of Vehicle Engineers (IVeH) for over 75 years.

■ Every vehicle that appears at the show will automatically be entered for an appropriate award category. There are seven award categories as follows:

- Bus - Double Deck
- Bus - Single
- Bus - Mini
- Coach - Midi
- Coach

- Accessibility
- Innovation

■ Judging will take place during the first day of the show (Tuesday September 23), with an independent panel of three judges for each category. Full details of the judging criteria for each category along with information on the judges themselves will be made available by the SAE-UK in due course.

■ The awards winners will receive stainless steel trophies, which will be presented by the SAE-UK's President, Bill Lowe, at the CPT President's reception.

■ The SAE-UK will also have a stand at the exhibition, which is expected to feature, among other things, recent design work undertaken on passenger vehicles by students from Coventry University.

Coach&Bus 2004

With *Coach&Bus 2003* already virtually a sell-out, many exhibitors will be already keen to reserve space at next year's *Coach&Bus*, which will once again take place at the NEC, Birmingham, and will run from November 2 to November 4, 2004.

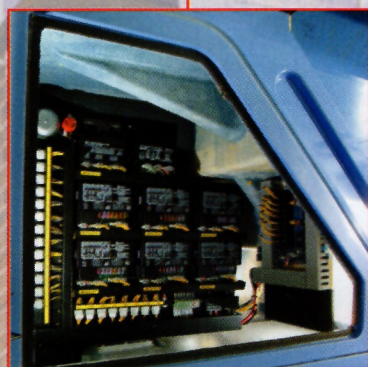
For the first time ever, *Coach&Bus 2004* will take place alongside Railtex 2004, the biennial world showcase for railway technology and a shop window for the UK rail market, further reflecting the increasing interplay between different modes of transport in the European passenger transport arena.

The sales launch for *Coach&Bus 2004* will be in July 2003 and exhibitors can either call the sales hotline - tel 020 7240 5800 or they will be able to reserve stand space at this year's *Coach&Bus* show.



See us on Stand 20•101
at the
**Coach and Bus Show
2003**

23-25th September



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QUICK AND EASY TO USE



Remove the roll bar assembly, exposing the worn areas. Clean, degrease and roughen the worn areas. The old bushes can be re-used.



Open the sachet of Eli-Flex by cutting the foil along the marked lines. Pull the sides apart until the separator pops up. Remove the divider clip.



Mix by kneading and squashing the pack until it warms up. (3-4 mins.) Slice open any corner with a knife or scissors.



Squeeze out the resin onto the worn areas of the roll bar. Spread evenly around bar with a flat edged implement. (Eli-Flex spatula available on request).



Refit the old bushes and tighten the assembly. Wipe away any excess resin. Allow to cure for 1-2hrs. Return vehicle to service. It couldn't be easier!



Now that you have the instructions all you need is Eli-Flex! Contact Aram at Eli-Chem Resins on

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Fax: 01483 450067

Mobile: 07711 669607

aram@elichem.co.uk
www.elichem.co.uk

**Eli-Flex anti-roll bar repair
NO WEAR. NOWHERE.**

Coach&Bus 2003 show exhibitor list

CompanyStand No

AK Carpets -		Eastgate Coach Trimmers	20.11	McKenna Brothers/Mobitec.....	18.9	Somers Vehicle Lifts Ltd	20.45
Ahead of the Rest	18.57	Eberspacher (UK) Ltd	20.117	Mentor Coach & Bus	VS20-1	Sport Hotel	T.33
AT Industries	17.95	Eli-Chem Resins UK Limited	19.42	Michelin Tyre Plc	17.2	Stanford Coachworks Ltd	M17
Accor Hotels	T.109	Eminox Ltd	19.37	Mitec Systems	20.143	Stedall (Vehicle Fittings) Ltd	17.3
Actia UK Ltd	20.103	Esprit Windscreen Systems LLP	18.63	Normandy Tourist Board	T.153	Stertil UK	19.48
Activ Cameras	20.131	Essential Sales Products Ltd	19.47	Olympus Coachcraft Ltd	M3	Technopoly Ltd	20.17
Allison Transmission	18.1	Esso Petroleum Co Ltd	20.121	Optare Group	VS19-4	Tek Seating	20.73
Almex Information Systems	17.32	Eurocoach Builders	M6	Oswaldtwistle Mills	T.97	Telma Retarder Ltd	19.46
Altro Transflor	18.84	EvoBus (UK) Ltd	VS20-2	P & P Sergeant (B & A) Ltd	18.87	TemSA	VS18-2
Arc Training & Consultancy	20.123	Excel Conversions Limited	M13	Paignton Zoo Environmental Park	T.25	Thames Transport Solutions	20.23
Arriva Bus and Coach Ltd	VS19-1	Farnborough Airshow	T.137	Partline	20.13	The Laser Cutting Company	17.76
Ashtree Glass Ltd	18.65	FCAV & Co	20.125	Phil Stockford		The Metropole	T.61
Aunde S.A	18.75	First Choice Clothing Ltd	18.79	Garage Equipment Ltd	VS20-12	Timeplan Limited	20.18
Autoglass Ltd	19.39	Fleetsure Insurance	T.9	Phoenix Seating Ltd	20.37	Tirol Hotels	T.45
Autolift Ltd	19.16	Fraser Eagle Group	VS20-3	Polyflor Limited	20.33	Towergate Chapman Stevens Ltd	18.7
Automate Wheel Covers	19.45	Freight Transport Association	20.63	Portaramp	M14	Toyota GB Plc	VS20-5
Autosound Ltd	19.9	Gauntlet Risk Management Ltd	18.33	Portland Heights Hotel	T.57	TransBus	VS19-2
BMC (UK)	M9	Gescotec, S.L	18.21	Powervamp Ltd	20.139	TransportEnergy	T.112
Backhouse Jones Solicitors	19.13	Glintfact Engineering	18.61	Premier Pits		Transtech Training Services	19.67
Bank of Scotland	19.1	GO BT - The Other Holland	T.119	(MBE Fabrications Ltd)	17.35	Triscan	18.45
Base Ltd	VS19-7	Golden Tulip Hotels, Inns & Resorts	T.121	PSS-Steering and		Truck-Align Co Ltd	20.101
BCE (UK) Ltd	19.63	Grammer Seating Systems Ltd	18.25	Hydraulics Division	18.69	Truck-Lite International/Preco Inc	18.41
Belmont International Ltd	18.19	Gramplan Software	19.51	PSV Glass	19.73	UVG (Modular) Ltd	M4
Best Impressions	19.53	Granning (UK) Ltd	17.79	Q'Strain	17.87	Unitec	19.35
Best Northern Hotels	T.23	Graphibus	18.73	R P Security	17.75	Unwin Safety Systems	M7
Blackpool Trim Shops Ltd	20.59	Graydon Automotive Services Ltd	20.187	Ratcliff Tail Lifts	M8	VL Test Systems Ltd	20.127
Bob Vale Coach Sales	20.9	Greatdays Travel Group	T.101	Rescroft Ltd	20.129	Valkering Incoming BV	T.41
Bova B.V. Autobusfabriek	VS19-5	Grim Dyke Hotel	T.47	Richards & Shaw (Trim) Ltd	19.19	Van Hool NV	VS18-3
Braketech	20.102	Griptone Ltd	19.49	Ricon UK Ltd	M5	Vehicle Inspectorate	
Bridgeclear Limited	20.27	Grup Florida Hotels	T.89	Road Pro Ltd	18.67	Training Services	T.111
Brigade Electronics plc	20.104	HM Customs & Excise	17.77	Roadlink International Ltd	19.7	Vehicle Inspectorate Training Services	T.1
Bright Tech Developments Ltd	18.29	Hanser Finance	19.2	Robert Wright & Son		Viajes Enna Tours S.A	T.139
Britannia Hotels	T.103	Happich V&I Components Ltd	20.99	(Coachworks Ltd)	VS19-3	Victoria Coach Station Ltd	T.59
Britax PSV Wypers Ltd	17.89	Harry Ferguson Vehicle Sales	M2	Rotary Lift Ltd	17.29	Vikan UK Limited	20.133
British Furtex Fabrics Ltd	17.31	Heavy Duty Bus Parts Ltd	19.21	Rowan Telmac Limited	19.59	Voith Engineering Ltd	20.111
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C E Niehoff & Co	20.119	HL Smith Transmissions	19.12	SBP Chapman Stevens Ltd	18.7A	Vultron International Ltd	17.83
Carlyle Bus & Coach Ltd	18.51	Holiday Ireland Tours	T.55	Scan Coin Ltd	18.3	Wales Official Tourist Guides Ass.	T.42
Catamaran Cruisers	T.127	Hotel Chateau du Broutel	T.99	Scandus (UK) Ltd	18.5	WashTec (UK) Limited	17.5
Chapman Transport Seating Ltd	18.59	Hotel le Bristol	T.73	Scania Bus & Coach Ltd	VS18-4	Webasto Thermosystems (UK) Ltd	19.23
Cie Tours International	T.87	Indicators International	19.61	Scarborough Borough Council	T.81	Wedlake Saint	19.27
Clayton Heaters	18.15	Inovas Ltd	18.11	SeaFrance Ltd	T.91	Welcome Break Group Ltd	19.15
Coach Drivers Club	20.182	Integrated Transport Smartcard Org.	19.57	Seaside Hotels Ltd	T.65	White Hotel Group	T.43
Coach Tourism Council	T.69	Invertec Ltd	18.17	Sika Limited	20.74	Wilcomatic	18.95
Coachassist Limited	19.6	Irisbus UK Ltd	M11	Simply Groups	T.71	Wrightsure Insurance Group	19.29
Cogent Passenger Seating	M12	Irisbus UK Ltd	VS18-1	Sitcar	VS19-6	Xinyi Group	
Commercial Exhausts Ltd	17.85	Isla Components Ltd	18.23	Smith Bros & Webb Ltd	17.91	(Glass) Co Ltd	20.25
Community Transport Association	17.81	IVU Traffic Technologies UK Ltd	20.29	Society of Operations Engineers	19.14	ZF Great Britain Ltd	20.95
Crest Coach Conversions	M10	JGE Carwash	17.33				
Crypton Technology	17.1	Jardine Lloyd Thompson	19.4				
Cubic Transportation Systems	17.99	John Groves Ticket Systems	19.5				
Cummins Diesel	19.71	John Holdsworth & Co Ltd	18.81				
Cyberlyne Communications Ltd	20.135	JW Glass (Steamy Windows) Ltd	18.49				
Cymric Conversions Ltd	M1	KMB Leisurewear	20.21				
DKV Euro Service UK Ltd	18.55	LHE Finance Ltd	19.31				
Deans Powered Doors Ltd	20.67	Leach Rawlence	20.19				
Department for Transport	19.55	Leisureplex Hotels	T.107				
Dialight	17.93	Leisurewear Direct Ltd	20.15				
Dinex Exhausts Ltd	19.17	Lion Laboratories	T.11				
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Duoflex Ltd	18.13	Martyn Industrials Ltd	18.83				
ERG Transit Systems	19.43	Mascot International Ltd	20.7				
East Lancashire Coachbuilders	VS18-5	Matador Co Ltd	18.71				
		MBB Lift Systems	19.65				



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A taste of what to see when at *Coach&Bus*

There will be many product launches at this year's trade show but there are plenty of exhibitors that are already making the news

The pages of *CBW* have already contained several news stories that make direct reference to launches at this year's *Coach&Bus 2003* show.

In this issue alone you will read about the high-powered option being offered by Optare for its top-selling Solo minibus - see pages 22-24. Optare has recently made other improvements and there's a hint that something special will be unveiled at the NEC.

Meanwhile, we know that the latest version of the 16-seat Ferqui-bodied Mercedes-Benz Sprinter is christened the Soroco NT. Striking styling has been incorporated into an already popular design - see *CBW* June 26. It is based on the 129 bhp 413 Cdi platform and has a choice

of manual or SprintShift semi-auto gearbox. It is sure to be displayed by Optare on stand VS 19-4.

At the other end of the vehicle scale will be some much larger coaches that are taking advantage of the relaxed rules on overall length. A 14-metre Bova Futura Magnum made a low-key entry into last year's show and the first such vehicle is on the road with Scotline of Edinburgh (*CBW*, June 19).

The Dutch coach manufacturer has a long experience of building coaches up to 15 metres. In March of this year, the 500th Bova Futura with a length of more than 12 metres, in this case an FHD 15-430XE Magnum, was delivered to Reisedienst von Rahden, in



Long Bovas may be new to the UK but Dutch manufacturer has built over 500

Germany. The first Magnum was delivered in 1994 and since that time other variants include 13.58 metres

and 12.7 metres. Bova expects to deliver the 600th such vehicle this autumn. Bova is on stand VS19-5.

First chance to meet new head of membership

Coach&Bus 2003 is Peter Gomersall's first outing as the Confederation of Passenger Transport's new Director of Membership.

Mr Gomersall leaves his present employment as Director with

insurers Belmont International and starts with the CPT on September 22. The show runs from September 23 to September 25.

In his new role he will be responsible solely for recruitment and retention of CPT members, reporting directly to the CPT Director General, Brian Nimick.

Meanwhile, the Belmont International team will be on stand 18.19, where Managing Director Barry Etchells will be promoting Belmont's own insurance services and CPT Insurance & Risk Solutions - the joint venture with CPT.

Coach Tourism Council will be Out&About at the show

Out&About is the new branding for the coach tourism area at *Coach&Bus 2003* and the Coach Tourism Council (CTC) will have a central presence on stand T69.

The CTC Tourism Village is at the heart of the tourism area and six major suppliers have already committed to taking shared space on its stand.

Stand sharing benefits CTC members who want to be under a common umbrella yet have full signage at a total cost of £1,295.

And, as an added bonus, each

company booking space on the CTC stand will receive one free ticket to the Autumn Dinner.

Although this dinner is not an official *Coach&Bus 2003* event, its timing on the second night of the three-day show provides a social highlight for CTC members and non-members alike.

The Autumn Dinner is being held at Villa Park's Holte Suite. Tickets cost £55 for members, £50 for non-members, with tables of ten priced at £550.

■ Further details on 020 8461 8325.

Buzzlines 13.7m Skyliner takes centre stage

Mentor Coach & Bus, the Hellaby-based Neoplan importer, has added longer Euroliners and Starliners to its portfolio but it will be a 13.7m Skyliner that takes centre stage on stand VS20-1 at *Coach&Bus 2003*.

The new 13.7m Skyliner double-deck coach is now available with up to 83 passenger seats and Buzzlines Ltd, based in Kent, will be the first customer

in the UK to receive this new model, which is its fifth Neoplan this year.

Buzzlines hopes to take delivery of this new vehicle in time for the show.

Mentor MD Chris Lavin says the recently-introduced legislation that allows vehicles up to 15m, subject to UK turning circle requirements, gives Mentor the chance to reach an even larger market.

Meet the new Scandus team

Bus seating manufacturer Scandus (UK) Ltd of Stourbridge, West Midlands, is restructuring its management team following the recent appointment of Paul Sproule as Managing Director. Mr Sproule will be leading his team on stand 18.5 at *Coach&Bus 2003*.

Mr Sproule has joined from sister company Glintfact Engineering Ltd,

which supplies frame and metalwork.

The restructured Scandus management team comprises: Chairman, Alan Garner; Finance Director, Nicola Sproule; Commercial Manager, Glenn Bowker; Quality Manager, Andrew Smith; and Operations Manager, Justin Taylor.

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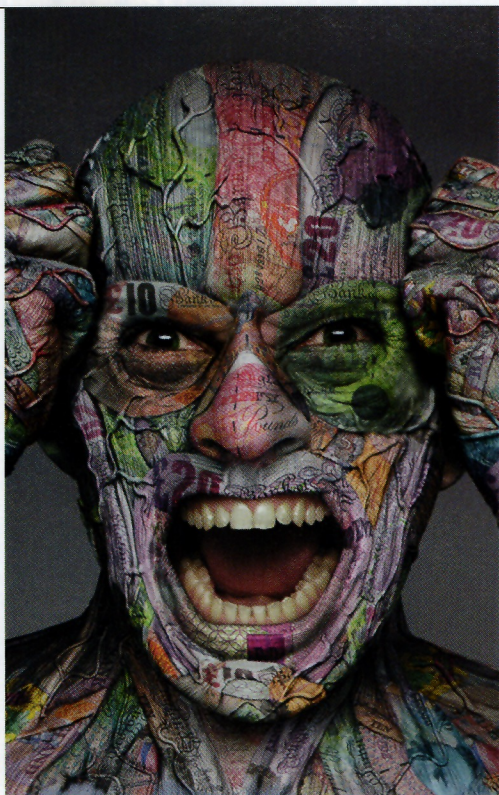
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Simonds among first to get Panthers on Volvo B12B chassis

TransBus Coach

Among the first Volvo B12Bs with TransBus Panther bodies to enter service is this coach for Simonds Coach & Travel based on the Norfolk/Suffolk border.

Simonds has long been a customer of the TransBus Scarborough plant, with Plaxton and TransBus bodies on 34 of the company's 40 vehicles. "We value having a sound partnership with our suppliers," said Martyn Simonds.

"We are using the new Panther on UK and European tours and it has had a very good reception from our customers. The B10M/Plaxton combination has served us very well over the last 15 years and the B12B/TransBus promises to be a worthy successor."

Simonds has acquired four new TransBus vehicles in the last eight months - the Panther, a Beaver 2+ and two Enviro 300s.

The new automatic B12B carries the company's distinctive golf leaf livery and is an air-conditioned 49 seater, with centre sunken toilet, video/DVD/CD and drinks facility for use on UK and continental tours.



Centro contracts mean two MPDs

TransBus International

Steady growth in the number of contracts operated on behalf of Centro, the West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive, has led to Zak's Bus and Coach Services adding two new Mini Pointer Darts to its fleet.

The vehicles bring to 12 the number of MPDs operated by the company. "A lot of our contracts are for services which run round the houses and where we need a vehicle which is compact and manoeuvrable," said

Managing Director Kevin Fazakerley.

As well as running the Mini Pointer Darts on mainstream services, the latest additions to the 50-bus Birmingham area fleet also run to adult day centres, where restricted access precludes the use of bigger buses.

"The Mini Pointer Dart is a versatile vehicle and with its step-free layout, provides easy access for disabled people and for those in wheelchairs," said Mr Fazakerley.

Noge Catalan Star joins Emmerson's Coaches

Mentor Coach & Bus

Emmerson's Coaches of Immingham, North East Lincolnshire, has acquired this MAN 18.310 based Noge 310 Catalan Star.

Featuring a ZF five-speed automatic gearbox, it has 53 Esteban reclining seats with inset leatherette

headrests, Hispacold air conditioning, Telma retarder with hand and foot control, tinted double glazing, Blaupunkt radio/PA/cassette, carpets, sun blinds fitted to front windscreen, two roof hatches, front TV/video monitor and a rear emergency door.



Pat's Coaches decides to buy new after 30 years

Volvo Bus

After almost 30 years in the coaching business, Pat's Coaches of Wrexham, North Wales, has celebrated "going limited" this year by taking delivery of its first brand new Volvo.

The B12M Berkhof will be used exclusively for the European tour work carried out on behalf of Travelscope Promotions.

Having many years' experience with pre-owned Volvo coaches, the Welsh operator was enthusiastic about adding its first brand new coach to the 16-vehicle fleet. Director Mark Davies said: "Volvos? We just can't fault them. We have been very pleased with all our pre-owned B10Ms and the service provided by our local Volvo dealer, Thomas Hardie at Dee-side, is simply fantastic."

The family-owned operator employs 21 staff and undertakes a variety of school contract work, day trips and private hire. Three of its coaches are permanently contracted to Travelscope Promotions, carrying its livery. On its behalf, the latest addition is already travelling the length and breadth of Europe.

Specification of the new coach includes a DH12D 12-litre engine, rated at 340 bhp, coupled to a fully-automatic ZF 5HP602 five-speed automatic gearbox with integral retarder.

The Berkhof body is configured with 51/53 reclining seats with three-point seatbelts, a demountable centre sunken toilet, Webasto heater, air conditioning, twin-monitor video system and drinks-making facilities.



Mark Davies said: "The acquisition of our first brand new Volvo is a significant milestone for us, as our long-term goal is to build up an all-

Volvo fleet. Based on the experience with our new Volvo B12M so far, there would be scope for many more in the future."



Vive Civis in Las Vegas

Irisbus

The first three Civis transportation vehicles, from an order for ten, are now en-route to Las Vegas after being officially presented to Curtis L. Myles III, Vice President of Las Vegas Regional Transportation Commission, by Guy Buschino, Chairman and Chief Executive of Irisbus subsidiary Heuliez Bus.

Scheduled to enter operation in December, the vehicles have been equipped with 330 bhp Cummins engines - requiring a rear overhang modification extending the total length to 18.3m.

Other specific changes were to allow for the integration of locally-

supplied parts included American-made windows, destination displays, driver and passenger seating, brakes and wheelchair ramps. The air-conditioning systems have also been upgraded to cope with extreme climatic conditions in the Nevada capital.

The first vehicles of their type to enter service in the USA, they incorporate an optical guidance system developed by Siemens. This steers the vehicle automatically, following painted guidelines on the road surface. They allow the vehicle to stop within 40mm of a stop to ensure easy boarding and reduced delays at bus stops.

Glasgow Citybus goes lowfloor

Arriva Bus & Coach

Glasgow Citybus is a relative newcomer in Glasgow and, in the first three and a half years, proprietor Russell Arden has built the operation up to 13 buses working three commercial services, a university contract and schools.

Its first lowfloor, a Wrightbus Cadet-bodied DAF Bus SB120, is to replace the last remaining Leyland National in the fleet.

The fleet profile includes three DAF SB220s in addition to the new SB120. Mr Arden has worked in depots using DAFs before and says he has great respect for the quality of the marque:

"With a DAF, you can expect reliability. The ease of maintenance makes them attractive for a small company with limited engineering

resources. Given proper attention at the monthly inspections, repairs during the rest of the month are usually unnecessary and on-road failures are rare," he said.

"I had seen the DAF Bus SB120s operated by Fishwick in Leyland and K-Line in Huddersfield and decided it was the ideal size for Glasgow Citybus. It is a full-width vehicle with excellent platform access, yet the overall length makes it easy to drive around the tight city centre corners and residential streets with parked cars."

The back-up service from Arriva was another influence for Mr Arden: "The Arriva people are very friendly. The parts staff are particularly proactive and clearly do everything possible to either supply the parts or advise on a local source."



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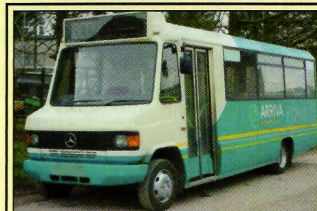
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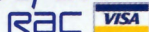
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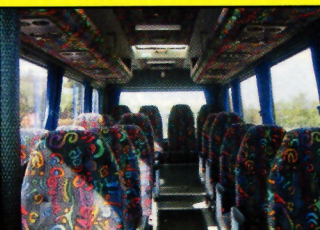
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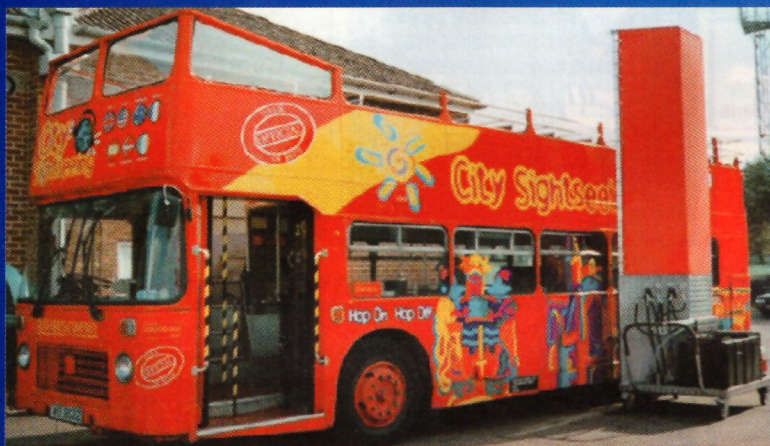
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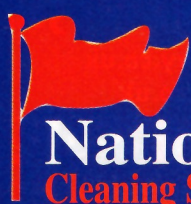


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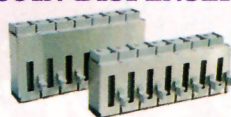
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- the day-to-day operation of Community Transport and/or Local Bus services,
- working with or on contracted transport operations.

It would also be an advantage to have experience of:

- project management
- working within local government
- dial-a-ride operations.

You should have five GCSEs Grade C or above or equivalent, including Maths and English Language. **Ref 885/7**

For an informal discussion about this vacancy, please call Chris Niblock, Public Transport Co-ordinator, on 01332 715045 or Sean Marshall on 01332 715048.

For an application pack please contact Development and Cultural Services, Roman House, Friar Gate, Derby, DE1 1XB. Telephone 01332 255983 or

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